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PAGES 20-24 A FESTIVE LOOK AT HOLTON ROAD

Shock news on Council mergers Page 10

LLANTWIT MAJOR AT CHRISTMAS PAGES 29-32

PICTURED (back row, left to right): Richard Bellinger, principal officer for libraries; Mike Church, local children's poet; Dr Rhys Jones; deputy Mayor, Coun Richard Young and deputy Mayoress, Annette Young – pictured with pupils from primary schools in Maesteg. Photograph by Toby Apperley. (SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 4).

'Last chance' for woman with 100 convictions

REPORT by AJ SICLUNA

A WOMAN with 100 previous convictions, most of them for drink-related matters, has been given her "last chance" at Cardiff Crown Court.

Rhiannon Roper (24) of Swyn-yr-Afon, Kenfig Hill, appeared for offences of shoplifting, assaulting a police officer, a breach of an ASBO, and the breach of a suspended sentence and a community order.

She pleaded guilty and sentence was adjourned until next month for her to "engage with the authorities and keep out of further trouble".

Judge Eleri Rees said the court was left with a stark choice and she felt that the odds that Roper would comply with orders were low.

She warned her: "If you fail to take advantage, you will be back in custody. It is up to you, it is your last chance."

Prosecutor Tony Trigg said that on October 13, Roper went to a Spar shop in Bridgend drunk, and began swearing at everybody, before walking out with a bottle of wine, which she smashed.

Police spotted her in Bridgend town centre, and she was arrested for breaching an ASBO by being drunk.

Roper was released on bail, and six days later was seen drunk again in Dunraven Place, Bridgend. She was taken into custody and spat in the face of a police officer.

The court heard she had convictions for 100 offences, mainly drink-related, damaging property, assaulting the police, affray and breach of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order.

Mr Trigg said she was in breach of a suspended sentence of 20 weeks for throwing a chair at someone in the Five Bells Inn, Bridgend.

When she was arrested, she punched a police constable to the head.

The breach of the community order involved theft and affray, during which she produced a knife when the police arrived on the scene.

Her counsel, Hugh Wallace, said: "This is a desperate case involving an intelligent young woman back in court again. When sober, she is extremely pleasant. Custody would be a disaster because she would lose her accommodation."

Roper read a letter to the court apologising for her behaviour and claimed she had been left without any mental health support.

POLICE CHECKS ON DOOR SUPERVISORS

SOUTH Wales Police, in conjunction with the Security Industry Authority (SIA), carried out spot checks across Bridgend and Maesteg on Friday, October 24, to check the compliance of those operating as door supervisors at pubs and clubs.

Police officers and licensing officers from South Wales Police, in consultation with investigators from the SIA, visited premises in Bridgend and Maesteg to ensure they were all SAI licensed and meeting licence conditions.

Eight venues were visited and 25 door supervisors were inspected. Of the supervisors inspected, only two failed to comply with SIA licensing conditions by not displaying valid SIA licences while on duty.

Under the Private Security Act 2001, it is an offence not to have possession of the valid licence while on duty as a door supervisor. The two door supervisors concerned were issued with warnings.

PS Dave Williams, from Licensing, said: "Well-trained, licensed door staff are key to making the night-time environment safe in our towns.

"At best, they are able to anticipate potential offences and prevent them getting out of hand, or at least keeping the public safe until the police can arrive".

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Readers' Letters

Please keep your letters BRIEF and address them to: The Editor at Glamorgan GEM Ltd, Graig House, 53 Eastgate, Cowbridge CF71 7EL or email gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk

LETTERS AND E-MAILS MUST INCLUDE FULL ADDRESS AND A CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER

IMPORTANT: We reserve the right to edit all letters. We do NOT accept anonymous mail. An email address alone is not sufficient!

SHORTAGE OF BATTERIES

IF, like me, you have found it necessary to wear a hearing aid, then you have also, like me, had to regularly replace those essential little batteries, because they are not re-chargeable .

Now if we need a battery for any other possession such as torches, watches, radios, etc., you can get them just about anywhere within walking distance, but not hearing aids!

One has to visit the hospital personally, or send a stamped addressed envelope to access further supplies.

Why? I have enquired in chemists, doctors surgeries, health centres and finally to MP Alun Cairns about this. He helped by enquiring from Mark Drakeford, the Welsh Minister for Health, the reason for this.

The reply came that: "The decision to close the centres and centralise the supply of batteries was made due tp the difficulties in ensuring that all centres were adequately stocked with batteries to meet the increased demand".

It further states that if you cannot personally visit your hospital then you can make: "A request by telephone for a postal service... The patient will not be expected to pay for postage, this cost will be met by the audiology department".

Apparently, this last statement is based on what happens at Heath Hospital in Cardiff, but is not so at The Princess of Wales Hospital in Bridgend.

Cynthia Merrett, Llantwit Major.

Community allotment's 'thank you' to traders

WE are a small privately-run local community allotment in Kenfig Hill, Bridgend.

Each year, we hold a free barbecue with a bonfire and fireworks evening for the local community. We held this event on November 8.

We had the help and support from local businesses, retailers and people from the community of Kenfig Hill, Pyle and Bridghend, with donations of money and food for the evening.

Without these donations, this event would not have been able to take place.

The Park Street allotment committee want to thank them for their generosity; a great evening was had by all.

I would also like to thank all Park Street committee members who worked on the evening and before the event for all their hard work that made it such a successful evening.

We hope to see you all next year – thank you.

G E Grant, allotment secretary, and G Mason, allotment chairman.

Local choir thanks Glamorgan GEM

MANY thanks for the superb layout of our recent feature in The GEM.

It created considerable interest and helped in attracting 20 potential members to our taster session.

Please extend my thanks to the staff for their support and guidance.

Gareth Jones,
(Barry Male Voice Choir).

EVERYONE IS A HERO AS LOCAL SCHOOL RALLIES TO PUDSEY!

ANYONE passing through Porthcawl last Friday would have no doubt been curious to find Superman, Buzz Lightyear, Wonder Woman and a whole host of other Super Heroes in the area.

But a closer look would have revealed that it was simply the pupils and staff from St Clare's School, who once again came together to show their support for BBC Children in Need. The theme for the day, which was set by the BBC as 'be a hero' inspired pupils and staff to come to school in a range of creative, brightly coloured costumes.

There were also a number of fundraising activities that took place on the day, which all together raised an impressive £1,181 for Children in Need. With just under 300 pupils in the whole school, this was a fantastic total and superseded the amounts raised by St Clare's in previous years.

The day started with pupils in the senior school being able to bid to be the 'master' of a sixth former for the day. The winning bidders were able to order members of the sixth form to carry out any tasks they wished, such as homework, carrying bags, and queuing in the dining hall for lunch.

This was followed by a number of activities at lunch time, the most popular being 'throw a sponge at a teacher'. Senior school pupils were surprisingly keen to have the opportunity to soak their favourite teachers, and the action became even more heated when headmaster Mr Antwis arrived dressed as Mr Incredible, ready to be a target for the wet sponges and buckets of water.

Meanwhile in the prep school, the younger pupils gathered around and placed their coins on a giant picture of Pudsey Bear, which raised over £100.

A fun day was had by all, and the generosity of St Clare's pupils, parents and staff was once again demonstrated. **JH**

£2.5m loan could see 130 homes built in Maesteg

OVER 130 new houses could be built in Maesteg, thanks to a £2.5m loan from the Welsh Government to carry out landscape improvements.

The loan will be used to complete site inspections and remediation work at three locations in the vicinity of Crown Road and Ffordd Dysgu and it is hoped that the land could be put on the open market for future residential development.

The first site is at the former Maesteg Lower Comprehensive School playing field, which could potentially accommodate 38 houses, with room for expansion on the former Glanllynfi House site next to it.

The second and third sites form part of the Maesteg Washery reclamation, and are located either side of Ffordd Dysgu, which leads to the new comprehensive school. If the scheme goes ahead, they could accommodate a combined total of 98 houses.

"Because of historic mining activity in the area, some of the locations will be subject to analysis and risk assessment to support any future planning applications," stated Coun Phil White, cabinet member for communities.

"We shouldn't underestimate the importance of this project for the Llynfi Valley. These sites are some of the last of our premium locations to develop in the valley. One of the locations is a former industrial site, and we are not going to attract industry to that location again like we did in the past, therefore taking the decision to develop housing at that site is a sensible one.

"We hope that by carrying out these improvements they will act as a catalyst for further private sector investment, while providing environmental benefits to the community.

"We've got to make Maesteg and the Llynfi Valley an attractive place for people to live in," he added.

Council backs White Ribbon

BRIDGEND County Borough Council is preparing to take part in 16 days of action to support the White Ribbon campaign against domestic abuse.

At 11.45am on November 25, the council will raise the White Ribbon flag above its Civic Offices to show its support for the movement, which is led by men who oppose violence against women.

Ospreys rugby stars Joe Bearman and Ryan Bevington will join White Ribbon ambassador Lee Jukes, councillors and representatives from the police, fire service, health sector and domestic abuse charities for the event, which the council will observe annually on White Ribbon Day.

A minute's silence will be held in memory of domestic abuse victims, whose lives have been taken from them by partners, family members, or through gender-based violence.

All male attendees will be invited to sign the White Ribbon Pledge, never to condone, commit or remain silent about violence and abuse against women, and nine partner organisations – including Bridgend Women's Aid, South Wales Police and Hafan Cymru – will be presented with certificates to show that they have gained White Ribbon Supporter status.

HIGH TIDE TIMES

(UNTIL NOVEMBER 27)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary. For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 – 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time AM	Ht M	Time PM	Ht M
20 Thur	04.37	9.1	16.54	9.3
21 Fri	05.20	9.5	17.33	9.6
22 Sat	05.58	9.7	18.15	9.8
23 Sun	06.37	9.9	18.56	9.9
24 Mon	07.17	10.0	19.35	10.0
25 Tues	07.58	10.1	20.17	9.9
26 Wed	08.39	9.8	21.04	9.6
27 Thur	09.26	9.5	21.52	9.2

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should check with a tide table specific to their location.

We abide by the code of practice upheld by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). This contains provisions for issues such as accuracy.

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WOMAN HAD SEX WITH TEENAGE BOY

REPORT by AJ SICLUNA

A 19-YEAR-OLD woman who had sex with a teenage youth, has been sentenced to three years' supervision at Cardiff Crown Court.

Abbi Long (19) of Wyndham Street, Bridgend, pleaded guilty to unlawful sexual activity with a child.

Prosecutor Tony Trigg said: "This is a sad, tragic story."

On June 9, he said, Long was seen in the Wyndham Arms Hotel, Bridgend, going upstairs with a teenage boy.

The police were called, he said, and they found the two on a bed in an embrace.

She denied there had been any form of sexual relationship, but a DNA sample proved there had been one.

Long was said to have a previous conviction for burglary and was serving eight weeks in a young offender institution. While on bail, said Mr Trigg, she went to London and was sleeping rough in Westminster.

The youth involved, said Mr Trigg, didn't wish to make a statement to the police.

Her barrister, Ruth Smith, said: "I have to accept this case passes the custody threshold, but she is shouting out for assistance."

Academically, she said, Long did well, but sadly she had a controlling, aggressive boyfriend whom she left.

Miss Smith said Long had always been candid with her, but that mentally she is a number of years behind her actual age.

"She has found custody incredibly hard, and self-harmed."

She added: "She has problems placing herself in the world. Her parents are desperate to assist, to prevent anything like this ever happening again."

Judge David Wynn Morgan said that all her life, Long had had parents of the highest quality.

He added: "The first thing I want to do is to get you out of prison as soon as possible. You should not have been sent there in the first place."

She was made subject to a sex offender treatment programme.

She was also ordered to register as a sex offender for five years.

INDECENT EXPOSURE:

Appeal for witnesses

POLICE in Porthcawl are appealing for witnesses following two incidents of indecent exposure which took place on Friday, November 7.

The first occurred at around 8.30pm when a woman in her late 20s from Porthcawl, was jogging near the Community Centre at Griffin Park when a man is reported to have indecently exposed himself.

A second incident, involving the same man, is believed to have occurred a short time later, when the woman ran past the Seabank Hotel, Porthcawl.

The suspect is described as being between 40-45 years old, about 5'4 inches tall, of medium build with dark hair. He was wearing jeans, trainers and a light grey toggle coat with a sheepskin grey or white hat with flaps that fall over the ears.

Anyone with information is asked to contact South Wales Police on 101, quoting reference number 1400418025.

Alternatively, call Crimestoppers free on 0800 555 111 or via their website www.crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information.

Police seek a rogue trader

POLICE have issued a warning after an elderly man fell victim to a rogue trader in the Bridgend area.

"The 80-year-old was in his home at Picton Gardens, Bridgend when a man offered to cut his back lawn. He agreed and handed over a large sum of money for the grass to be cut," a spokesperson said.

"The suspect is believed to be white, of large build, with dark hair, around 6ft tall and possibly in his 40s. Officers would like to speak to anyone else in the area who has seen him or were visited by him offering to cut grass at their home.

Call South Wales Police on 101 quoting reference number 1400280568, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 (website www.crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information).

Call made for witnesses after woman robbed

DETECTIVES are appealing for witnesses, after a 25-year-old woman was robbed at about 6.30pm on Wednesday, November 12, while walking her dog from Litchard towards Wildmill.

It is understood that two men demanded that she hand over her rings, which she did, and they then demanded her mobile phone. When she refused, she was struck on the head and fell to the ground. The woman was taken to the Princess of Wales Hospital by police officers for treatment and later released.

The jewellery is described as two white gold rings, with two colour gold and a white gold engagement ring.

Contact South Wales Police on 101 quoting reference number 1400424146; or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111 or ww.crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information.

Police appeal over white van in Porthcawl

BRIDGEND Police detained a suspect breaking into a house on Newton Nottage Road, Porthcawl, thanks to witnesses who reported suspicious activity.

The burglary occurred around midday on Monday, November 3.

A witness saw two men and one female, who appeared to be acting together, at the house on Newton Nottage Road.

A white van was also seen on Newton Nottage Road prior to the burglary. The van was later found abandoned on Walters Road in Bridgend.

Police are appealing for anyone with any information to the burglary, or who may have seen a white van on Walters Road later in the day to come forward.

South Wales Police are asking anyone who may have any information in connection to the burglary to contact them on 101, quoting reference number 140012264.

Alternatively, Crimestoppers can be contacted anonymously on 0800 555 111 or via their website www.crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information.

Efit is issued after assault on teenager

SOUTH Wales Police have issued an Efit image of a man they want to question after a 17-year-old girl was assaulted in Bridgend.

The incident happened around 1.45am on Sunday, November 2 near the YMCA in Bridgend.

The male is described as white, around 19-21 years old with brown eyes and short jet black hair.

Detectives in Bridgend are urging anyone who recognises the man in the Efit, or thinks they may have seen him in Bridgend town centre or the YMCA area around the time of the incident, to contact them on 101 quoting reference number 1400410716. Alternatively, Crimestoppers can be contacted anonymously on 0800 555 111 or via their website www.crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information.

The Bridgend MP with Hugh Bailey MP and younger members of the audience.

BRIDGEND MP HOSTS A SUCCESSFUL NATO TALK IN BRIDGEND

THE Bridgend MP, Madeleine Moon, hosted a Nato event at Carnegie House last Tuesday.

Following on from the Nato Summit held at Newport in September, Madeleine invited Hugh Bayley MP, president of Nato Parliamentary Assembly to the Bridgend constituency.

Madeleine said: "I was delighted to welcome Hugh Bayley MP to Bridgend to give a talk on the Nato Parliamentary Assembly. I was pleased to see the event supported by pupils from the local comprehensive schools, as well as local organisations, businesses and constituents.

"Hugh talked about the 28 Nato member countries, and how the Parliamentary Assembly worked and provided interesting information on defence spending and defence capabilities. Hugh was very engaging and following his talk there were many questions from the audience about current situations across the world that Nato was involved in."

Despite the defence cuts, it was pointed out that the UK has the fifth largest defence budget in the world ($57.0bn) with the United States of America as the first ($600.4bn), followed by China ($112.2bn), Russia ($68.2bn) and Saudi Arabia ($59.6bn).

Questions ranged from the Ebola Crisis, cyber warfare, maritime surveillance and the Russian threat, the depletion of the UK's defence assets and the future of the armed forces. Both speakers emphasised that with Russian military airplane incursions into European and North American airspace back at cold war levels this was an important time to understand the role of Nato.

Hugh said: "It was an excellent outreach opportunity for me to speak about the work of the Nato Parliamentary Assembly to an interested audience in Bridgend."

The event was free, but generous donations were received for the Bridgend Food Bank.

More events are planned, with the next being held on February 26, 2015 – when Joan Whalley MP will be talking on climate change.

Pencoed WI's fayre a success

ON Saturday, November 8, we held our autumn fayre in the Welfare Hall, and what a morning.

Most of us were very wet by the time we had unloaded the cars, but steam dried rushing around setting up stalls!

Despite the weather, people did come and with the rain clearing later in the morning, we did quite well. We would like to thank Richard Roberts Butchers, Phil Roberts Fruit and Veg (Friday morning in Social Club car park), Pencoed carpets, Crumbs and Bloomin' Stylish for their support and donations of a raffle prizes.

Thanks to all of our members who baked, donated tombola prizes and bric-a-brac, manned the stalls and made the coffee; also thanks to the stall holders who attended.

Lastly, a very big thank you to all who supported this year's fayre. We will be presenting a cheque for £500 to First Responders at our January meeting.

On behalf of Pencoed WI, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and a healthy 2015.

VW

School praised by Estyn report

STAFF and pupils at St Mary's and St Patrick's Catholic Primary School in Maesteg have been given a positive report by schools inspectorate body Estyn and the Archdiocese of Cardiff.

In a report considered by the cabinet of Bridgend County Borough Council this week, Estyn said that most pupils made good progress, that provision for those with additional learning needs was good, and that many pupils used their literacy and numeracy skills effectively.

Teaching was judged to be of a good quality throughout the school, with good standards of behaviour and provision for pupils' wellbeing, while headteacher Jackie Phillips was praised for having raised expectations to tackle underachievement.

The judgements from the inspection also highlighted other areas as being good, including prospects for improvement, provision, care support and guidance, learning environment, leadership and management, improving quality and partnership working.

Mrs Margaret Buckley, chair of the board of governors, said: "The governing body is delighted that the Estyn inspectors have recognised that St Mary's and St Patrick's is a good school with good prospects, and has the childrens' interests at heart."

Former miner's art exhibition

FORMER miner turned artist Gordon Farmer is holding an exhibition of his work at Blaengarw Workmen's Hall on Thursday, November 27, and Friday, November 28, from 10am to 4pm.

He was once praised by Max Boyce as a 'local Rembrandt' after Gordon presented him with a portrait.

Gordon, who took up art seriously following an injury, told The GEM: "There will be 50 mounted drawings on the walls and the large cinema screen will be showing other art of mine and my portfolio of A3 drawings."

NFU SPEAKER

NFU chief dairy adviser, Sian Davies, will be addressing Glamorgan NFU Cymru members at their AGM on November 26 at 7.30pm in Grove Golf Club, Cornelly.

She recently returned having worked in the NFU office in Brussels for three years, covering EU agricultural policies.

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Dr Rhys Jones shares a smile with pupils from Ysgol Cynwyd Saint.

INSPIRING CHILDREN TO USE LOCAL LIBRARIES

Pupils from St Mary's and St Patrick's RC School strike a pose with Dr Rhys Jones.

BRIDGEND Library and Information Service has teamed up with local primary schools to inspire children to use their local library and provide every child aged eight and nine with a free library card.

The 'Every Child a Library Member' project started in March this year with six local authorities piloting the initiative and, thanks to Welsh Government funding from the Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism, a further 25,000 children will now benefit as the scheme is being introduced in 10 more local authorities, including Bridgend County Borough Council. Recently, year four pupils from local primary schools attended events at the libraries in Maesteg and Bridgend to launch the new initiative and enjoy fun group activities promoting the importance of the library and the opportunities available there.

Champion of this new initiative, Dr Rhys Jones – best known for his hit BBC series including 'Rhys to the Rescue' and 'Dr Rhys Jones's Wildlife Patrol' – was on hand to talk to the children about his adventures and lead them through a creative session.

He said: "Libraries are such an important resource for children - they are a great place for them to let their imagination grow and to develop and it is vitally important that we encourage our children to read more not only to improve their literacy levels but also to help them with life skills and future opportunities."

Once proof of address is provided, children can have access to thousands of free books, use the computers as well as many more resources to help improve their school work and enhance their leisure time.

For more information about Bridgend Library and Information Service, or the 'Every Child a Library Member' initiative, telephone 01656 754800, or email blis@bridgend.gov.uk.

'Respect shopworkers' – CALL BY CAMPAIGNERS

Janice Gregory with USDAW representatives (left to right) Rose Bevan, Bryony Hamblin, Nick Ireland, David Woodhams, Janet Spillane.

JANICE GREGORY AM has backed USDAW, the shopworkers' trade union, at the launch of its 2014 Respect for Shopworkers week.

The union's Freedom from Fear campaign seeks to prevent violence, threats and abuse against shopworkers. A change in the law to give them better protection against assault is central to the campaign.

Union leader John Hannett has pointed out that his members are required to enforce the laws. "Whether that is preventing under-age purchases of products like knives, tobacco or alcohol, or detaining shoplifters until the police arrive, they can be put in real danger. Parliament has given shopworkers the duty to enforce the law and Parliament should provide the necessary protection."

USDAW activists in shops and supermarkets across Wales are holding campaign events to urge colleagues and customers to back a change in the law to provide stiffer sentences for those who assault workers serving the public.

They are also reminding customers to 'Keep Your Cool at Christmas', a time when frustration can lead violence and abuse against shopworkers to peak...

The AM for Ogmore added: "It is shocking that a shopworker is assaulted every minute of every day. The leniency of some of the sentences handed out is unacceptable."

New employment horizons beckon for Gareth at Rockwool!

Rockwool have found a new member of staff through the South West Workways project.

A BRIDGEND county borough-based manufacturer is one of the latest companies to employ a new member of staff with the support of the South West Workways project.

Rockwool International make and supply a full range of smart and sustainable insulation products for the construction industry based on innovative stone wool technology. They recently employed Gareth Williams as an IT installation assistant at their Pencoed site, with help from the EU funded project.

Led by Neath Port Talbot Council, in collaboration with Bridgend County Borough Council as well as Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, City and County of Swansea councils, the Workways project is backed by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government.

The project provides support with job searching, CVs, application forms, interview skills, telephone techniques and access to training.

Gareth (26) from Bettws, was struggling to find work after losing his job in September 2013. Unable to secure a new job, Gareth's confidence was hit, and he struggled with options for further support. After hearing of Workways, Gareth signed up to the project in February this year.

Gareth said: "I was finding the job searching process quite overwhelming. I was trying my hardest to find a job, but the longer it went on, the lower my confidence was getting. I didn't know where to turn.

" I'd heard about Workways and decided to get in touch and see what support was available. Workways were a huge help. My mentor, Louisa, was great.

"She helped me make the necessary changes to my CV and showed me ways of selling myself to prospective employers.

The weekly jobsearch sessions were brilliant too. The Workways staff often had information on jobs that weren't always published in the public domain. Once I'd had some valuable help on interview techniques, I found my confidence increasing," said Gareth.

It was at one of the Bridgend Workways job club sessions that Gareth met employer liaison officer, Simon Richards.

It soon became apparent that Gareth's past technical experience and knowledge of IT systems made him a perfect match for a temporary vacancy at Rockwool.

Gareth's CV, as well as those of other Workways participants', went to Rockwool. Once the interviews had been concluded, Gareth was offered the position: "I was over the moon to receive the job offer. I love the role and it's a great working environment here.

"Everyone's been great. Customer service and client care is a big part of the role, and I've been in my element upgrading the IT systems here. I've already been on a few site visits to London and I'll be heading to Denmark soon to carry out some work on site too."

Matthew Hesp, service desk manager at Rockwool said: "Gareth has fitted into the team really well, and adds to an already positive work atmosphere. The help that Workways offer is invaluable to both the participant and the employer. The tailored, one-to -ne support is something that others may well miss out on.

"I would recommend it to any employer, or anyone that's currently unemployed."

To find out more about Workways, call 01656 815173 or visit www.workways.co.uk.

PORTHCAWL TENOVUS FAYRE

PORTHCAWL Tenovus Christmas fayre will be held at Porthcawl YMCA on Saturday, December 6 from 10am until 4pm, with numerous stalls, including a tombola and raffle.

Santa will be there too and the £1 entrance fee will include a cup of tea or coffee and mince pie.

All money raised will go towards Tenovus projects, including a new 'Manvan' mobile unit delivering help and advice on male cancer awareness.

If anyone would like to volunteer at the Porthcawl Tenovus Cancer Charity shop on John Street in Porthcawl, call in and ask for Pat, Sue or Martin.

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Children's Charter is launched at a major conference

RIGHT: Some of the young people who helped prepare the new charter.

CHILDREN and young people have helped design a new charter setting out the rights of youngsters using ABMU health services.

The draft charter, based on the United Nations Convention Rights of the Child, was launched at the second annual Children's Conference taking place in Swansea on Monday.

ABMU Chairman Andrew Davies said: "I gave a commitment in 2013 that we would draw up a charter for children as part of our policy of being a rights-respecting organisation.

"I am delighted to see this commitment being put into practice and putting children at the heart of our services."

Youth council members and children and young people receiving care in hospital, as outpatients and within the community across Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University health board area have been involved in preparing the draft charter.

All service users and key partners will have the chance to help shape the final version during a three-month consultation period following the children's conference.

The United Nations Convention Rights of the Child sets out what children need to survive, grow and fulfil their potential.

Information, safety, respect and privacy and confidentiality are among the rights covered by the charter.

ABMU's head of nursing for women and children's services, Sian Passey, ABMU board non-officer member Gaynor Richards and Mike Mainwaring of Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services (NPTCVS) led the project.

They and their teams worked with youth councils from the Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot, and Swansea areas to develop the draft charter.

Children and young people receiving care, along with paediatric nursing, play and community staff were also involved.

Sian said: "All children and young people, no matter what their abilities, have the right to life and healthy development, including the best treatment to help them grow up healthy and happy."

ART SOCIETY TO HONOUR RNLI

PORTHCAWL Art Society visited Porthcawl RNLI to obtain some ideas for paintings relating to the RNLI.

Next year is their 50th anniversary and Porthcawl Art Society is going to put on an exhibition and donate the paintings to raise funds for the RNLI.

The exhibition will be on display at the Grand Pavilion in June next year.

KPC Youth receives a £3,000 fillip

FOLLOWING votes from members of the public, KPC Youth has been awarded a grant of £3,000 from Lloyds Bank – to enable it to continue doing good work with young people and providing an open-access youth provision for local youngsters aged eight and over, offering a wide range of diversionary activities, advice, information and support.

In addition, the charity also works with unemployed young people and older members of the community to help them increase their employability opportunities, develop skills and help improve their lives.

Project manager Alison Mawby said: "The Lloyds Bank Community Fund will make a huge difference to KPC Youth.

"It will enable us to continue our work to help make a difference to the lives of hundreds of young people and their families in our local community.

"All at KPC Youth would like to thank everyone who voted for us either in Branch, on line, or via Facebook or Twitter – and enabled us to win this fantastic grant from Lloyds."

COUNCIL CONSULTS ON PROVISION OF TOILETS

RESIDENTS across Bridgend County Borough will be asked to have their say on the future of public toilet provision, as the council attempts to make £50m of savings over the next few years.

The cabinet of Bridgend County Borough Council has agreed to formally consult on the future of council-owned public toilets, their operating hours and staffing arrangements.

As part of the consultation, groups representing elderly and disabled service users will be asked to give their views, along with the Citizens' Panel, Equalities Panel and town and community councils.

Because of cuts to public service funding, the council needs to review the number of toilets it currently operates.

Any proposals to close or amend the operating arrangements for public toilets will take into account the views of the community and users of the public conveniences.

Coun Phil White, cabinet member for communities, said: "The cabinet has not come to this decision lightly.

"Public toilets are an important service which we have operated for many years for the convenience of residents, visitors, the elderly and disabled.

"However, with £50m of savings to be made over the next few years, we have to be absolutely realistic about what that means.

"Any decision on the future of public conveniences will be subject to a full consultation – everyone will be given the opportunity to have their say."

Transport consultation in the county

MOTORISTS, bus and train users, pedestrians and cyclists are all invited to have their say on future transport plans for Bridgend County Borough by taking part in a public consultation.

By the end of January 2015, Bridgend County Borough Council has to submit its local transport plan to the Welsh Government which will set out proposals for improving the local transport network over the next 15 years.

A draft local transport plan has been drawn up by the council, and residents are being invited to comment on it by going online at www.bridgend.gov.uk/consultation.

The consultation runs over six weeks until Wednesday, December 31.

People can also give their views at the following community workshops that have been arranged at various venues across the county borough:

Thursday, November 20: Maesteg Town Hall, 4pm-6pm; Monday, November 24: Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl, 4.30pm-6.30pm; Tuesday, November 25: Pencoed Miner's Welfare Hall, 4pm-6pm; Wednesday, November 26: Garw Valley Life Centre, 4.30pm- 6.30pm; Thursday, November 27: Pyle Life Centre, 5pm-7pm;Tuesday, December 2: Ogmore Valley Life Centre, 4.30pm-6.30pm; Wednesday, December 3: Bridgend Life Centre (The Rec), 4pm-6pm; Thursday, December 4: Sarn Life Centre, 5pm-7pm; Wednesday, December 10: Coity Community Centre, 5pm-7pm.

Coun Phil White, cabinet member for communities said: "An efficient and effective transport system makes it easier for people to get to work, school, college, access services and generally go about their daily lives.

The draft local transport plan outlines how we would like to see our transport network develop between now and 2030 and I would urge residents to take part in this consultation."

Shopmobility's new permanent home approved

PLANS to relocate Bridgend town centre's Shopmobility service to the Brackla One multi-storey car park at Cheapside, have been approved by the cabinet of Bridgend County Borough Council.

The new location for the free service – which lends scooters and wheelchairs to anyone who has difficulty walking – will keep it within a five-minute journey time of town centre shops while ensuring that it can continue in the most cost-effective way.

The current Shopmobility scheme, based in the Rhiw car park, has been operating since the pedestrianisation of Bridgend town centre, with running costs supported by a contribution from Bridgend Town Council of £10,000 a year.

But with the Rhiw car park set to be demolished and rebuilt as part of the council's £6m Vibrant and Viable Places project, cabinet members have agreed to move the Shopmobility service to a new, permanent home.

Council officers will now undertake further consultation and clarification with Bridgend Town Council on maintaining safe and convenient routes with the retail heart of the town, and on the design of the new facility.

The cabinet rejected plans to temporarily suspend the service while the Rhiw car park was rebuilt, because of the inconvenience it would cause service users as well as the knock-on effect on local trade.

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Pam's life is transformed by exercise!

Verina Fisher, Pam Beall and Verina Bertorelli hold up Pam's old size 30 trousers.

A local resident was delighted to be singing as part of the Tenovus 'sing with us' choir last week at Bridgend Life Centre, with friends she met when she made a life-changing choice to tackle her health and weight problems eight years ago.

Pam before her weight loss.

Pam Beall, of Nantymoel, has lost a whopping 10 stone, dropping from a size 30 to a size 10 – 12 since joining the National Exercise Referral Scheme in 2006.

The scheme enables residents with certain medical conditions to be referred by their doctors to improve their lifestyles and health problems.

Pam said: "Eight years ago, I had become disabled with spinal and hip problems due to my size, and it was having a huge impact on my life.

"As part of the GP referral scheme, I saw someone in Bridgend Life Centre, then known as the recreation centre, who suggested water therapy which I began to enjoy the benefits of. I lost one and a half stone initially, then had to lose a further three stone for a hip operation in 2009."

Pam began by taking part in aqua therapy – water based exercise which is suitable for people of all abilities, before building in more activity as she became fitter.

Her success meant that three years ago, her doctor congratulated her on reaching an ideal weight.

Today, Pam still maintains her fitness with aqua fit classes three times a week and using the hydrotherapy gym. She is a well-known face at Bridgend Life Centre and now has a completely different relationship with food, saying: "Before joining the exercise referral scheme I had yo-yo dieted all my adult life, but now I just eat sufficient to my needs. I am not on a diet, but I know what's good for me and what's not. My muscles are now strengthened due to the exercise so my health problems have improved, and I've met some lovely friends and joined the choir, so it's been a really positive experience."

Pam met friends Verina Bertorelli and Verina Fisher during the water therapy groups and their friendship has gone from strength to strength.

Verina Fisher, who was referred by her GP due to her having rheumatoid arthritis, said: "Regardless of my health issues, the activity enables me to have regular exercise, as well as meeting new people. I would encourage anyone to join as I have found the group beneficial on many levels."

The group of friends have since joined the Tenovus 'sing with us choir', who they sang with at Macmillan's 'Enhanced Cancer Recovery Roadshow'.

When Pam, Verina and Verina first joined, Bridgend County Borough Council directly operated the National Exercise Referral Scheme, with the Welsh Assembly Government and Public Health Wales initiative now being delivered by Halo Leisure at Bridgend Life Centre as part of their contract with the council to manage local leisure centres.

BCBC and Halo Leisure offer a varied range of activities for anyone wishing to get fit or change their lifestyle. Some of the activities on offer include over-60s swimming, aqua therapy, and healthy hearts circuits. The Love2Walk scheme also operates community walks tailored to various abilities.

Coun Charles Smith, cabinet member for strategic change, said: "Pam is a brilliant example of how the National Exercise Referral Scheme is making a difference within our communities.

"It encourages people to make changes to their lifestyles which will benefit their health, as well as offering a social element which Pam and her friends have shown.

"I'm sure that Pam's story will inspire others who would like to lead a healthier lifestyle."

For anyone wishing for more information on the exercise referral scheme, talk to your GP or visit www.wlga.gov.uk/ners, for community walking v i s i t www.love2walk.co.uk, or for more information regarding the Tenovus choir or any of their services visit www.tenovus.org.uk

'Inspirational' choir delights the Leatherhead audience!

Great Welsh choral singing is brought to the Home Counties!

THERE was a wonderful welcome for Bridgend Male Choir at St Mary and St Nicholas Church, Leatherhead.

The concert was inspirational and a welcome return visit to Surrey.

It was one of those afternoon concerts which is difficult to explain how the chemistry between choir and audience moved forward.

It was touching, tender and heart-rending to so many, especially during the poignant month of remembrance.

The Rector, Graham Osborne, said: "This concert was inspirational. It took to the heights we looked for and it rocketed even further."

The full Bridgend Male Choir musical team of Rhiannon Williams-Hale, Stephanie Bailey and Scott Williams were in excellent form, the choir was in good voice and the audience was warm and welcoming.

Dotted among the audience were exiles who were just as enthusiastic as the rest of the audience and they loved the sound of the choir.

Out of the programme, the section dedicated to remembrance was most appreciated. Mike Sammes' arrangement of 'For the Fallen' stunned them all, but the congregation was quite overwhelmed by Soldier's Farewell and Mansions of the Lord and sat in reflective silence before breaking into a quiet reflective appreciation.

Another memorable afternoons return to Leatherhead is likely to result in the future repetition at this beautiful church and this a p p r e c i a t i v e congregation. This concert was inspirational to all including the choir.

Bridgend Male Choir's next concert is on Friday, December 5 at St Mary's Catholic Church, Bridgend. Tickets are available at the church.

Geraint Hopkins

Who wants to build what and where?

J D Wetherspoon – ***3 Commercial Street, Maesteg*** – *New signage including fascia, projecting, menu casting, amenity board and heritage plaque.*

BCBC Regeneration – ***Various sites in Bridgend County Borough*** – *Install 19 x A1 interpretation panels (15 panels are within conservation areas).*

Mr Haydn Davies – ***1 Cae Pentice, Cefn Cribwr*** – *Cut back overhanging branches (1989) OBC No 7.*

Mr Norman Fricker – ***Cefn Gelli Fields, Bettws Road, Llangeinor*** – *Proposed horse stables.*

Rethink The Ink Ltd – ***9-15 New Road, Porthcawl*** – *Change of use to a tattoo laser removal business.*

Ms Denise Lodge – ***262 New Road, Porthcawl*** – *Convert and extend double garage to form new granny flat.*

Malpeet K9 Academy Ltd – ***Land at The Stables (Gilfach Orfydd), Dimbath Lane, Blackmill*** – *Relax condition 5 of P/14/123/FUL to allow maximum number of candidates of six at an one time.*

Mr Luca Kostic – ***5 Wigan Terrace, Bryncethin*** – *Detached garage to rear.*

Mr Reg Denley – ***58 Dunraven Place, Ogmore Vale*** – *Lower ground floor ext to rear with balcony above, new steps to front giving access to lower ground floor.*

Neath Port Talbot Planning Department – ***Foel Trawsnant Bryn, Port Talbot*** – *13 wind turbines with max tip height of 120m to generate 39mw with associated works.*

Mr R Howells – ***96 Cefn Road, Cefn Cribwr*** – *Remove existing conservatory and rebuild a single storey flat roof rear extension.*

Anwen Care Ltd – ***Heol P a n t - y r - A w e l , Pantyrawel, Bridgend*** – *Retrospective consent for vehicular access ramp from upper ground floor level to lower ground floor level.*

Mrs Hayley Rogers – ***7 Queen Street, Brynmenyn*** – *Two storey rear extension.*

Mr Owain Ford – ***Land off Cwmdu Road, Mynydd Bach, St Johns, Maesteg*** – *Shed to store machinery.*

Mr Bruce Falkenberg – ***2 B r y n l l y w a r c h , Maesteg*** – *Two storey extension, access ramp, retaining wall and vertical access lift.*

Mr Barry Newton – ***15 Christopher Road, Maesteg*** – *Remove existing conservatory and erect rear single storey extension and loft conversion.*

Mr K Roberts – ***Land off Llan Road (Cherry Lodge Farm), Llangynwyd, Maesteg*** – *Prior notification for an agricultural building to store machinery and tools.*

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCES IN PORTHCAWL

A TALK entitled 'Archaeology and Climate Change' will be given on Friday, November 29, 8pm, in the Green Room, Sustainable Wales, 5 James St, Porthcawl CF36 3BG. Tel 01656 783962.

A spokesman said: "Remember the recent uncovering of two 200-year old cannon in Porthcawl? Is that evidence of climate change?

"This continues to be an emotive subject but what evidence is there in man's past that can contribute to either side of the debate?"

Martin Little, resident archaeologist at Porthcawl Museum, will be discussing some familiar and not so familiar historical events involving extreme weather and the effects it had on our communities.

Everyone welcome. Entrance £3. Telephone 01656 783912 for more information.

On Friday, December 5, 8pm in the Green Room *Who's Afraid?*, a lecture-performance, written and performed by Rhodri Hugh Thomas will be presented.

It features the fictional Dr Gareth Jones, an environmental scientist and campaigner who, as he reaches middle age, begins to lose his faith in the environmental movement and succumbs to cynicism and irrational fear.

In reviewing the tensions at work in our modern, technological democracies (and himself) he begins to understand where his fear and cynicism comes from and makes a direct appeal to younger generations to take up the challenge of finding the answers to our current problems and to provide the vision he feels he is losing.

With contributions from Atlantic College students and members of the public, this combination of lecture, stand-up comedy, drama and video aims to both provoke and entertain.

Rhodri Hugh Thomas is an actor, writer and sustainability consultant. After graduating with a BSc in environmental biology, he spent 13 years in the performing arts, appearing in many theatre, television and radio productions (including the BBC sitcom *Satellite City* as Dai the barman), before returning to the world of environmental science in 2003.

He now works freelance and for Cynnal Cymru. He is an advisor to Sustainable Wales.

All welcome. Entrance £3. Telephone 01656 783962 for more information.

The history of Christmas cards is explained

THE November meeting of Sker WI was held recently. The charity evening was enjoyed by all with Caryl Thomas telling amusing stories about the time she and her husband entered ballroom dancing competitions.

Caryl showed us some of the dresses she wore which were amazing. Members also enjoyed some wine and nibbles.

The speaker for the monthly meeting was Mr Stephanos Mastoris who gave a very interesting talk on the history of Christmas cards, which first appeared in 1843.

Stephanos showed how the cards had changed over the years, with those in the 1880s being more elaborate.

During the 1950s charities started to sell them.

Since computers have been used there has been a drop in the number of cards bought but still millions are sent every year.

There is a varied programme to look forward to with our Christmas fayre coming soon and also a trip to the theatre to see 'White Christmas' followed by a meal afterwards.

The next meeting is 'Party Time' on December 11 at 6.30pm at St David's Hall, Nottage.

Anyone wishing to join us is very welcome.

ANN VIPOND

DEALING WITH THE CHALLENGES OF MODERN DAY COMMUNICATION...

WESTMINSTER NOTEBOOK

Bridgend MP MADELEINE MOON writes an exclusive column from Westminster for The GEM.

TWITTER and Facebook are seen as essential tools for MPs to communicate with constituents.

Some of my colleagues are much better organised than I am at sending out quick messages about debates, events and things happening in their day. I have to admit I struggle to be part of the Twitter and Facebook generation.

I have to work at it, usually being nagged by the young people I employ in Westminster. Sometimes it is a double-edged sword.

I sent out a message saying I was on my way to an All Party China group meeting to look at pensions in China. A constituent replied very annoyed to say that a few weeks ago I had tweeted that I was pleased at the successful elections in Tunisia and now I was going to a meeting about pensions in China.

Why was I not just focusing on Bridgend?

In today's inter-connected world everything affects Bridgend, is the simple answer.

When you look at the conflicts across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Tunisia stands out as a gem of success in a region where the uprisings that led to the downfall of authoritarian regimes has led to internal conflict and war. Tunisia is a country we should congratulate for its inner strength in struggling to find a democratic peaceful way of living.

The meeting about Chinese pensions was an eye opener. China has a population of 1.3 billion and by 2025, 450 million of its population will be of retirement age. With a single child policy and a high level of responsibility on the eldest male child to care for parents in old age, the lack of pensions has a huge potential for instability.

It also brings opportunities for the West to assist in finding a way forward because of our experience of both private and public sector pensions.

Those few Twitter characters make it difficult to explain the complexity of why, as an MP, you give attention to issues and regions where the impact on government departments and spending is not always obvious. They do, however, give constituents the opportunity to access information about where you are and what you are doing.

I had one such tweet when in a taxi heading to Cardiff. I was to take part in an interview about attacks on UK citizens by Libyan soldiers brought to the UK as part of our commitment to build the capability of Libya's army after the fall of Gaddafi.

The constituent wanted to know why I was not in a meeting in Bridgend College looking at cuts to the council budget.

Although only eight people attended the Bridgend College meeting, I think I may have enjoyed it more than doing the TV interview.

Of late I always seem to be at the wrong end of the country when I appear on television. This means you sit in a studio on your own and stare into a camera with an earpiece giving you questions from someone you cannot see.

Let me stress when I say you sit in a studio this is often less glamorous than it sounds. Once, I sat on a high stool in the middle of the BBC newsroom in Cardiff with my feet on a lower stool while facing a camera lodged on the top of a filing cabinet. On this occasion, things did not go well.

I spent 30 minutes clapping my hands and saying "123', as the studio manager and engineers struggled to get my voice and actions to synchronise with my image on the screen. Meanwhile, the public were being told that they were still waiting for me to arrive to take part in the studio discussion which was happening in London.

Last week, I was interviewed in a small room in London by Cardiff studios. It was 9.30am and crammed into the room were myself, two of my staff and a technician, while projected behind me was a shot of Westminster by night as the interview as going out late that night.

Television is certainly not all glamour. I once came out of the Today studio on Radio 4 to be greeted by someone asking me if I would do an interview on the BBC 24-hour news. I said no as I had a mosquito bite on my lip that made me look as though I had had a one sided Botox injection that went wrong.

I was told not to worry about this as make-up artists often have to hide cold sores and other blemishes for presenters. It is unusual to have make up for news programmes but for this one I did.

It was an early morning show so I went all day with my bite hidden. It was worth getting up at 5.30am to do a live broadcast at 6.30am.

Trying to reach out to constituents to explain the work you are doing is a constant struggle.

Be it short tweets, Facebook chats, interviews where you talk to the voice in your ear, radio interviews in the street outside of your house, or knocking on doors, it is all part of the same drive to explain the complexities of today's world and the decisions we face.

Rotary club gets digging for local primary school

BRIDGEND Rotarians with their president, Sue Cassidy, First Minister Carwyn Jones AM, and the county borough Mayor, Coun Gary Thomas, recently attended a tree planting ceremony at Pen-y-Fai Primary School.

Mrs Bach, the headteacher, was delighted to see so many Rotarians with so many spades, ready to dig through some very tough ground to plant over 100 saplings of various types.

Sue Cassidy said she was delighted that so many members were there on such a beautiful morning, along with the First Minister, the Mayor and his consort.

This was a wonderful opportunity to mix with the children of the school and with the people of Pen-y-Fai.

She said: "We are always delighted to be part of such a community project. Our motto is 'Service above Self' – and we endeavour to achieve this in every way we can, including planting trees for life and raising thousands of pounds for local charities.

"You will see many of us shortly in all the major stores collecting at Christmas time for our charities."

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- surgical complications
- hospital complaints and NHS redress
- any other negligence claim.
Katie will be at Brackla Community Centre, 1 Whitethorn Drive, Bridgend CF31 2PQ on the date listed below:
Monday 24 November 10am - 4.30pm
No appointment is necessary, we can also arrange free telephone consultations and home visits. Contact:
Katie McCraith
T: 0800 0938240
E: katie.mccraith@hughjames.com
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PORTHCAWL STUDENTS PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

PHOTOGRAPHS by MALCOLM NUGENT

ONCE again, the students and teachers of Porthcawl Comprehensive School made a tremendous effort to raise funds for Children in Need.

This year, the total raised will be in excess of £4,000. Entering into the spirit of things, students in fancy dress collected through the week

As is usual during this week, on the final day teachers put on a show in the theatre. This year it was 'Stars in their Eyes' with some excellent performances by all involved .

(For a full report, please see page 20).

Part of the teachers' show.

ABOVE: The 'Head Team' were dressed as jellybeans.

A Kate Bush tribute act from the teachers' cabaret.

The Scoobies!

Porthcawl is a traditional school with a proven track record of excellence for all in Years 12 and 13.

AS and A2 results consistently compare very favourably with local and national figures.

In 2014
100% of pupils achieved A* - E passes
35% were at grades A*/A
84.41% were at grades A* - C
316 A level papers were sat

This year 25 pupils joined Porthcawl for the Sixth Form from other schools.

"I couldn't believe how welcoming everybody was and how quickly I settled in."

Our recent Estyn Inspection Report was very positive and we were proud to read that:

"One of the school's strengths is the exceptional working relationship between teachers and pupils. The school has a strong ethos based on fairness and this creates a caring and disciplined environment."

"The school works highly effectively with a range of partners and this work has a significant impact on pupils' wellbeing and achievement. Collaboration with other providers ensures that Sixth Form students can choose from a comprehensive range of academic and vocational courses."

"In the Sixth Form, students perform above the family and Wales averages for both the level 3 threshold and wider capped points score... Both boys and girls achieve well at the level 3 threshold and in 2012 there was virtually no gap between their relative performance."

Any student or parent interested can obtain more details and the "welcome pack" by emailing
year12openevening@porthcawlschool.co.uk

Alternatively you may wish to telephone 01656 774100.

Further information can be found on the school website: www.porthcawlschool.co.uk

RAF personnel from MoD St Athan take part in drawdown

PICTURED (left to right): SAC(T) Mark Shaw, Cpl Daz Walsh, Cpl Chris Elespe, Chf Tech Ian Savage, Cpl Iain Stubbs, SAC(T) Billy Easton and Cpl Chris Morgan.

CHIEF Technician (Chf Tech) Ian Savage, along with a team specialist airmen and women, who have all trained at MoD St Athan, have recently been welcomed home to the UK after taking part in the drawdown of UK Armed Forces at Camp Bastion, Afghanistan.

A spokesperson reports: The move from Camp Bastion was a huge undertaking, preparations for which had been ongoing for several years.

As part of 903 Expeditionary Air Wing (903EAW) Chf Tech Savage and his team of mechanical and electrical technicians supported a wide range of equipment. These included airfield fire and rescue vehicles, air cargo handling equipment, and passenger x-ray machines, all of which were vital to keeping the air bridge open.

In addition to this task, they were responsible for equipment to enable the redeployment of personnel and equipment from Camp Bastion, as well as the support equipment for the helicopters of all three services.

Their contribution enabled the success of missions including movement and support of troops on the ground, intelligence gathering and the highly important casualty evacuation role.

Almost all the equipment used in Afghanistan over the past 13 years has had to be redeployed. Every item of equipment, including that used by the St Athan trained airmen, had to be accounted for. Toolkits, spare parts and larger items of equipment such as ground power sets and aircraft passenger access steps has to leave in the correct order, at the correct time and in the correct condition and this was a huge undertaking for the team.

As the amount of equipment reduced, the importance of keeping the remaining equipment serviceable and functioning increased. During this time, inevitably some of the equipment failed in the harsh desert environment, with daily temperatures often reaching well over 40 degrees and the team rose to every challenge that befell them.

Over the years many of the team had made numerous trips to Afghanistan. However, some of the younger members were experiencing their first taste of operational service and quite rightly felt privileged to be involved at such a crucial stage of events.

RAF personnel undertake tours of four months or longer and take over from colleagues who have had served similar length tours. Personnel from 4SoTT support operations and continually deploy throughout the world on a rotational basis.

These operational tours, together with their specialist trade knowledge, gives the 4SoTT instructors vital experience and currency. This knowledge, experience and professional confidence is then passed on to trainees and students to assist with pre deployment training at the school.

Tories vow to stop Vale and Bridgend getting together

THE Vale Council and Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) have announced that they are keen on merging, while Conservatives in the Vale have vowed to stop the plan.

Since the Williams Commission produced its report for the Welsh Government (WG), saying that the number of local authorities in Wales should be cut from 22 to around 12, it has appeared likely that a merger would have to take place.

There was pressure on the Vale Council to merge with Cardiff, and on BCBC to merge with Neath Port Talbot.

Last week, the Vale Council Leader, Coun Neil Moore, emailed councillors saying: "In view of developments since the last meeting of full council on September 29, 2014, including the outcome of discussions with a variety of partners on the options available to the council, I now believe that the Vale Council should seek a voluntary early merger with BCBC".

The councils have until November 28 to tell the WG of their interest in a voluntary merger.

BCBC is solidly Labour, while in the Vale, Labour is very much the senior partner in a coalition with the Llantwit Firsts.

The Conservatives, on the other hand, strongly opposed a merger with Cardiff – and they are equally unhappy with BCBC!

The Leader of the Conservatives in the Vale Council, Coun John Thomas, said: "The Conservative group will vigorously oppose these plans. Councillors of all parties, including Labour, voted against a merger with Cardiff on the basis that the Vale has the potential to be a viable and successful authority. What has changed?

"Earlier this year, Coun Moore described the Williams' proposals as a 'slaughter of local government' and I would urge him to put Vale residents above narrow party interest and abandon these discussions."

The Conservatives also attacked on another front, with a regional AM, Suzy Davies, putting in a Freedom of Information request, asking what consultation measures had been taken by BCBC.

One of the questions posed by a merger is how council tax would be collected. A Band D property, for instance, is more expensive in BCBC than in the Vale.

Upon merger, it would seem that the only harmonisation solution would be for Vale residents to pay more, and BCBC residents to pay less!

The number of councillors needed would be fewer, and it is likely that both the Vale and BCBC would lose between 12 and 14 councillors.

(See next week's GEM for more on this.)

Charity coffee morning

THERE will be a coffee morning in the All Saints Church Lesser Hall, Victoria Square, Penarth, this Saturday, November 22, from 10am until 11.30am.

Admission (50p) will include tea/coffee.

Plenty of bargains to be found! All proceeds to charity.

£25 GEM FACEBOOK PRIZE

Our GEM Facebook winner for November 13, 2014 is:

DAPHNE SHACKSON

who correctly answered last week's question in The GEM.

Our lucky winning reader, chosen at random wins a £25 prize voucher to spend with any advertiser in last week's GEM.

The competition runs every week throughout 2014 with a potential prize fund of £1,150.

Congratulations, Daphne!

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Tidy Wales annual recycling awards

RECYCLING enthusiasts are being urged to apply for a Recycling Innovation Award, as part of the Tidy Wales Awards 2014.

They are open to small scale community projects and organisations who "take innovative measures to reduce, reuse or recycle waste through their activities".

The Keep Wales Tidy environmental charity, which runs the Tidy Wales Awards, is again calling on volunteer groups, schools and organisations across Wales to put their names forward by November 28.

The shortlisted three groups will be invited to the award ceremony in Cardiff next February, hosted by S4C presenter Sian Thomas and Keep Wales Tidy Ambassador, former Welsh Rugby star, Tom Shanklin.

The overall category winner will be announced at the ceremony and will receive a £250 cash prize.

Download an application form from the Keep Wales Tidy website www.keepwalestidy.org or e-mail twa@keepwalestidy.org.

Ukip names local man as its candidate for the Vale constituency

by GEM REPORTER

ABOVE: Kevin Mahoney.

UKIP has announced that its Vale candidate for the forthcoming 2015 General election will be a local man Kevin Mahoney.

He is the third person to enter the fray. Alun Cairns, the local MP, is standing for the Conservatives, and Vale cabinet member, Chris Elmore, is representing Labour.

Mr Mahoney was selected last week at a meeting of the recently formed Vale Ukip branch.

He is an engineering supervisor, was brought up in Sully and now lives near Barry docks. He was elected on to the Vale Council in 2012 and has previously represented Ukip in general, Welsh and European elections.

Mr Mahoney pointed out he was the only Vale councillor who refused to accept the recent pay rise awarded to Welsh councillors, in addition to taking a voluntary additional £800 per annum pay cut from the local authority in protest at wage and 'working week cuts' proposed for council workers.

He told The GEM: "As an ordinary working guy disgusted with the actions of the current political class, I am standing in order that voters have a real alternative in the Vale to voice their own feelings about our future. If people want to raise an issue with me, I can be contacted on 01446 746671."

Operation Christmas Child needs volunteers

VOLUNTEERS are being sought to assist with the checking of shoeboxes in connection with this year's Operation Christmas Child campaign.

The warehouse being used this year is Unit C39 on the Llandow Industrial Estate, Cowbridge and those interested in helping are asked to turn up at the warehouse where Mr and Mrs Ted Bird, Mr and Mrs Roy Hibbert together with Mrs Leanne Popham and others are busy checking boxes already collected.

Last year, over 25,000 boxes were collected in south Wales and sent off to children in a number of east European countries and, hopefully, this figure will be achieved again this year.

Supplies of ready-wrapped empty boxes are available at the warehouse, which is open from 10am each day.

GREAT WAR AT ART CENTRAL

THE Vale Council's art gallery, Art Central, is hosting an exhibition of remembrance marking the 100 year anniversary since the beginning of World War One.

The exhibition will provide a variety of interesting, stimulating and thought-provoking exhibits, including work by a selection of artists, local stories that include artist Suzanne Grover, who is showing a triptych of her family members in tribute to the Great War, together with an interactive display by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) entitled 'Hope in the Great War', all transporting the viewer back in time to 100 years ago.

Among the artists will also be Cardiff based photographer Jon Poutney, who will be showing monochrome photographs of First World War memorials and monuments from across the Vale.

Poutney has photographed these iconic memorials using a 1930s German 'Voigtlander' camera, gifted to his grandfather by an Italian prisoner of war during World War Two. The camera produces beautiful nostalgic photographs that create a reflective and invaluable visual story for many years to come.

Accompanying Poutney will be Welsh ceramicist Tracey Baker. Taking inspiration from the war horses used in battle during World War One, Baker creates hauntingly beautiful and captivating sculptural artworks that stir and move the viewer.

The exhibition 'Remembering the Great War' will be on display at Art Central until January 3, 2015. The gallery is open to the public from 10am to 4pm Monday to Saturday, and entry is free.

Biggar signs up for Oil 4 Wales

OSPREYS' fly-half Dan Biggar is the latest Welsh international rugby player to join Oil 4 Wales as a brand ambassador.

The Swansea-born player joins Wales' current kicking coach Neil Jenkins and Welsh international players Ken Owens, Dan Lydiate, Rhys Priestland, Ryan Jones, Jonathan Davies and former Welsh international Dafydd Jones to support the independent oil distribution company.

As the oil brand for Wales, Oil 4 Wales has a strong affiliation with Welsh rugby sponsoring the Scarlets, Newport Gwent Dragons, Ospreys and Cardiff Blues teams, as well as supplying some of the country's leading players.

Colin Owens, managing director of Oil 4 Wales, said: "We are a proud Welsh company and are delighted to be able to support Welsh rugby. Our slogan is 'working with the community, for the community' and having brand ambassadors on board like Dan is a great way to thank our loyal customers. Dan's commitment and passion for Welsh rugby is exactly the same ethos we have at Oil 4 Wales so we know he will be a great addition to the team."

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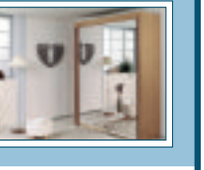

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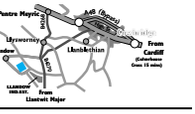

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INSIGHT INTO THE ARMY IN WALES

PICTURES BY HEATHER MARCH

THE Lord Lieutenant of South Glamorgan, Dr Peter Beck, hosted the annual Lieutenancy dinner last week when the guest speaker was Brigadier Martyn Gamble, Commander 160 (Wales) Brigade, who gave an account of the current duties and responsibilities of the army in Wales and globally.

Five new Deputy Lieutenants were commissioned, including three from the Vale of Glamorgan: Colonel Kevin Davies from Cowbridge, Mr David Jenkins from Barry (the present High Sheriff) and Commander Neil Pugh from Penarth.

Brigadier Gamble with the Lord Lieutenant.

David Jenkins.

Commander Neil Pugh (HMS Cambria) receives his commission.

Are you going to Romilly fayre?

ROMILLY Primary School Christmas fayre will be held on Saturday, November 29 from 1pm-4pm; Santa's grotto, craft stalls, bouncy castle, face painting.

Berry the puppy leads campaign!

A PORTHCAWL woman is leading a festive recruitment drive for Guide Dogs Cymru – with the help of a puppy named Berry!

Sandra Corben, of Newton, is a familiar sight in the town as she prepares the nine-month-old golden retriever puppy for advanced guide dog training.

Mrs Corben, a first-time puppy walker, is urging more people to volunteer at a recruitment event in Trinity Church, Porthcawl, on Tuesday, November 25.

"Puppy walking for Guide Dogs was something my late husband and I always planned to do," said Mrs Corben. "We loved dogs, having owned golden retrievers for 30 years. "Sadly, I was widowed last year. I knew I would need a project to keep me focused and give me something to get up for each day. I decided to go ahead with our plans."

Berry arrived in March, aged eight weeks, and will stay until spring. "When the time comes, I know it won't be easy handing her back to Guide Dogs," said Mrs Corben. "But it will be a positive goodbye as she goes on to better things."

Sandra Corben and Berry out shopping.

Becoming a puppy walker has helped her make a whole new group of friends. "We meet up with our pups and let them enjoy free running time together," she said. "When I'm out, people are friendly and want to know more about Berry, and the work of Guide Dogs in general.

"It's my job to introduce Berry to as many new sights and sounds as possible. It's good to include the puppy in your daily routine, visiting shops and garden centres, doing the school run, going on public transport and joining in family days.

"There's great support from Guide Dogs staff, plus puppy training classes for exchanging tips and ideas."

Guide Dogs supplies basic equipment and covers all veterinary and feeding expenses. Volunteers need access to a car, and their yard or garden must be securely fenced to keep the puppy safe.

They need to be with the puppy for most of the day, and free to take it into many varied environments – sometimes busy and difficult.

"Puppy walking is just the challenge I needed," said Mrs Corben. "Will I do it again after Berry goes? You bet!"

Find out more at Trinity Church, Porthcawl, between 11am-3pm on November 25. For more details, e m a i l Steve.Kersley@guidedogs.org.uk or ring him on 07785 907728.

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Prince Charles in plea to value the countryside

PRINCE CHARLES has warned that unless we all learn to value what the countryside provides, the familiar British landscape will be lost forever.

In Country Life he has written: "The rich, natural tapestry that is the countryside we value so highly does not just happen by itself. But that delicately woven tapestry is facing unprecedented challenges.

"Start pulling out the threads and the rest unravels very rapidly indeed, and is very difficult to put back again – no farmers, no beautiful landscapes with hedgerows and stone walls; no thriving rural communities, no villages – or village pubs; no local markets, no distinctive local foods. Somehow, we need to find a way to put a value on our countryside, with all its facets."

The Prince's Countryside Fund, founded by Prince Charles, who has a long-held commitment to supporting Britain's hard-pressed rural areas, was set up by Business in the Community in July 2010. With support from businesses and donations from the public it has been able to invest £4.4 million by providing grants that have directly benefitted 80,000 people living and working in our rural communities in greatest need.

Helen Aldis, manager of The Prince's Countryside Fund, said: "Our work to support and sustain rural communities would not be possible without the generous contributions of our supporting companies and individuals alike.

"In addition to contributing to the funding of 105 projects across the UK to date, the quick and generous reaction to the plight of the farmers and communities hit by the devastating floods in early 2014 is a testament to how businesses and communities can work together in times of crisis.

"However, we must continue to invest in supporting the people who care for the countryside, to ensure it flourishes and survives for future generations."

GEM readers' response to Africa appeal was simply 'overwhelming'

IN your January 30 edition of The GEM, you published my appeal for warm clothing and hand tools for a project/charity.

The response was overwhelming; the goods were packed in 27 banana boxes on their journey to the village of Yomba and the surrounding isolated community.

Eventually, all arrived by sea-container and road – a long journey.

I encose photographic proof (*top right*) that the village children gratefully acknowledge the gifts in late October.

Roy Gee,
Dinas Powys.

The African children were delighted with readers' gifts

Porthkerry theft case is postponed

A JURY at Cardiff Crown Court, trying two women who are alleged to have broken into a Vale of Glamorgan country house and stolen jewellery and watches worth £100,000 has been discharged, writes AJ SICLUNA.

On the second day of the trial, following discussions between counsel and Judge Christopher Llewellyn-Jones, which cannot be reported for legal reasons, the case came to an end and will be relisted in the future.

Paula Miles (34) and Claire Gimblett (39), both of Peacehaven, Tredegar, were granted bail.

They had each pleaded not guilty to burgling Porthkerry House, Porthkerry, and stealing property.

PHOTOGRAPHER'S DISPLAY AT LOCAL RESTAURANT

LOCAL Penarth restaurant The Bistro, has teamed up with local photographer Kevin Moore to launch a new photographic exhibition that will run from 6pm, Thursday, November 27.

Cheryl Day, proprietor of The Bistro, says she is "delighted" to promote local art and literary events.

The exhibition follows the success of The Bistro's Dylan Thomas evening where well-known actors Lynn Hunter and Nathan Sussex gave readings from Dylan Thomas.

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Moving occasion as the community pulls together for old soldier Harold

by PHILIP IRWIN

A FUNERAL in St Athan last Thursday (November 13) proved to be a fitting end to a remarkable social media campaign to mark the life of an 85-year-old local man.

Following the death of former Welsh Guard Harold Morgan, who lived in a care home in Barry for 14 years, it had been feared that nobody would turn up after funeral directors and the church struggled to track down family and friends.

However, thanks to an appeal launched on Facebook by the vicar who presided over his service, a contingent of Welsh Guards joined local veterans to give him a proper send-off.

Local people and friends of Mr Morgan also came forward as a result of the appeal.

The Revd Rachel Simpson said, "When we first had the details of the funeral come through we were given no next of kin details, which is very unusual, so I was worried at the service there would only be the solicitors and the nurses from the nursing home, and that's not a very nice way to go."

But after the story was taken up across the country and Rachel was interviewed by television and radio, including Radio 4's *Today* programme, more and more people came forward wanting to attend and in the end the church was packed.

The Assistant Bishop of Llandaff, David Wilbourne said: "I am deeply grateful for the particular care that Revd Rachel Simpson took over the funeral of Harold Morgan.

"It would have been tragic if this old soldier's funeral had gone unnoticed, particularly in this week of poignant Remembrance.

"A passage from Ecclesiasticus, often read at funerals, speaks of those who seem unremembered, disappearing as though they had not existed, as though they had never been.

"The book was written 22 centuries ago, so clearly no-shows at funerals were a feature then! I have taken funerals of very elderly people, attended by very few, simply because their relations and friends have died before them or moved far away."

A local man, William Henderson, attended the funeral and said: "The Welsh Guards resplendent in their full dress uniforms and complete with their bandsmen, formed the guard of honour, with members of the RAF and students of a military college.

"South Wales Police joined members of other civilian services to line the long approach from the road to the church and with The Royal British Legion standard bearers, the coffin was escorted into the church, with every seat and pew filled.

"Little could Harold have imagined when he wrote his will out many years ago, stating he wanted his funeral to be in St Tathan Church, what a wonderful gathering would attend.

"In the eulogy Rachel read a hand delivered letter that had come from Warwickshire, which read as follows: 'NO Welsh Guardsman serves or dies alone. We are family'.

"It was from Field Marshal Charles the Lord Guthrie; Major-General Christopher Drewery; Lt Col David Lewis; and all the family of the late Major William Mostyn Worrall MC.

"It has to be said, however, that in this instance, as the members of the Welsh Guards readily admit, somehow Harold slipped through their net but we are fairly sure he would have felt his send off at St Tathan at least addressed that omission.

"Did this funeral create much outside interest? The day after the funeral the Parish Office had an e-mail from CBS News in New York, asking how many people attended and how old was the Welsh Guardsman, so dear reader, your guess is as good as mine!"

Present at the funeral was Vale MP Alun Cairns, who said: "The local community came out in what was a wonderful act of support for Mr Morgan at the funeral. The service was very well attended, and it was such a fitting event for the former Welsh Guardsman in a week where we remembered so many."

Through the Facebook appeal it emerged Mr Morgan, who had lived in Owain Court before moving to a care home in Barry, was a founding member of the Welsh Railways Research Circle.

Rodney Hall, secretary of the Welsh Railways Research Circle, confirmed a number of the group's members were at the funeral.

He said: "A couple of our members continued to visit Mr Morgan when he went into the home. But it appears they did not get the message he had passed away".

Following Mr Morgan's funeral in St Athan, he had a green interment at a burial field in Abermule, Montgomeryshire last Friday – at a site overlooking the Cambrian Railway.

Mr Morgan, who had been a railway signalman, did his national service with the Welsh Guards and was posted to Egypt.

Ken Ball, of Park Funeral Diectors, told The GEM that they had been delighted that, with the help of all the other parties, they had been able to fulfil Mr Morgan's wishes.

He said: "Harold had clearly planned his funeral in some detail, and we were glad to play a part in this fitting conclusion to his life."

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Senior Citizens

THE November meeting of Cowbridge Senior Citizens is today (Thursday, November 20) at 2pm at the Lesser Hall, Town Hall, Cowbridge.

The speaker is Stephen Jarvis, and the topic is 'Cooking up the past'

The Christmas lunch is at the Bear Hotel on Thursday, December 18. Names must be given at the meeting, or telephone Mavis Ashford on 01446 775508.

Jazz meeting

THE Vale Jazz Festival group is inviting the public to a meeting to discuss funding plans today (November 20) at 7pm in Barry Civic Offices.

The group invited the VCVS along to discuss approving a constitution and applying for Arts Council funding.

Newydd Housing has become the latest company to back the festival which is planned for Barry Island in June 2015.

Anti-poverty centre opens

A NEW 'Christians Against Poverty Debt Centre' is being launched on November 21 in the Wesley Methodist Church, Tondu at 7.30pm.

Christians Against Poverty helps people to get free from debt and is a free service completely run by donations and supported by local churches.

The head office is in Bradford and there are about 300 centres in the UK and also in Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

"The churches in the Aberkenfig district are working together and last year opened 'The Store House' charity shop that is run by volunteers and is helping to fund the centre," Marlene Ockwell, CAP centre manager explained.

Dinas surgery

A FREE coffee morning for residents will be held on Saturday, November 22 in the Murchfield Hall, Sunnycroft Lane, Dinas Powys at 11am, to meet local county and community councillors.

Alternatively, Plaid councillors can be contacted directly: Chris Franks 07725 497423; Val Hartrey 02920 513274, and Keith Hatton 07749 825751.

Plant trees for heroes

VOLUNTEERS will be needed to plant another 400 trees along Port Road East as a living memorial to the 700 Barrians who never returned from the First World War.

The event will take place on Saturday (November 22) meeting at the junction of Merthyr Dyfan Road and Port Road East at 12 midday.

For further information, phone Rob Curtis on 01446 736287.

University drop-in

THE Open University will be holding a drop-in information session at Cowbridge Library on Saturday, November 22 from 10am – 2pm. For more information, contact *www.open.ac.uk/wales* or call 02920 471170.

Church fayre

ALL Saints Church, Park Road, Barry, is holding a craft fayre and coffee morning in the church on Saturday, November 22 from 10.30am to 1pm.

Handmade gifts, cards, jams, pickles, Christmas decorations, bric-a-brac, tombola, cake stall, raffles. Entrance 50p, payable at the door. All proceeds go to church funds.

Autumn fayre at Dinas Powys

THE parish of St Andrew Major autumn fayre on Saturday, November 22, at the Parish and Lee Halls, Britway Road, Dinas Powys, will be opened by Father Christmas at 2pm.

Handmade gifts, cards, Christmas decorations, White Elephants, books and cakes.

Charities receiving donations from this year's fayre include the DEC Ebola Crisis Appeal, Help for Heroes and the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Ebola appeal

NAZARETH Baptist Chapel, Wigan Terrace, Bryncethin holds a Christmas fair on Saturday, November 22 from 12pm – 2pm to raise funds for Ebola Appeal.

Hospital staff pack down for colleague

STAFF at the Welsh Ambulance Service and University of Wales Hospital accident and emergency department are organising a charity rugby match – to raise money for a sick colleague.

Adrian Cook, a paramedic in the HART team in Bridgend was recently diagnosed with cancer and his friends and colleagues have rallied to support his fundraising efforts. All proceeds from the rugby match will be going to Adrian's chosen charity, Marie Curie.

Staff from the Welsh Ambulance Service will meet University of Wales Hospital emergency unit staff in a battle on the pitch at Cardiff Arms Park on November 23 at 2.30pm. Tickets cost £2.50 and are available on the day.

To donate a raffle prize, book tickets or for more information call Fran Joyce on 07932 018406.

Oldcastle PACT

THE Oldcastle PACT meets on November 26 at 6.30pm in Brynteg Lower School Library. Members of the neighbourhood policing team and local councillors will be in attendance to discuss any issues that residents may have.

Age Connect host Christmas fayre

Age Connect Cardiff and Vale is holding a Christmas fayre on Thursday, November 27 at the Civic Offices, Corporate Suite, Holton Road, Barry. The fayre will be opened at 10.30am by Coun Howard Hamilton, Mayor of the Vale .

Admission to the fayre is free. Stalls to include cakes, crafts, home made preserves, bric-a-brac, 'prize every time' and more, with bargains galore.

Refreshments, tea/coffee available. There will also be a grand prize draw with many attractive prizes. Tickets 20p each.

All proceeds of the fayre go to Age Connect Cardiff and Vale Ageing Well Project, Senior Health Shop, Barry. Contact 01446 732385 for further information.

Ynysawdre hall choir date

YNYSAWDRE Village Hall presents an evening with The Ogmore Valley Male Voice Choir on Friday, November 28 at 7pm.

Admission is £5 and includes a homemade cake and tea or coffee. For tickets, call Mair on 01656 722115.

DH

School concert

HOLTON Primary School's junior choir will be performing a musical concert at Crossway Methodist Church in Barry, on Wednesday, November 26 at 2pm.

Tickets £2 each (including refreshments afterwards), young children are admitted free with a paying adult. All proceeds will go towards the church interior Space project and the Vale Methodist area Zambia schools project.

Tickets are available from the minister, Rev Peter Taylor, on 01446 406262 or revpete@live.co.uk, church members or from the school office.

Luncheon club

VALE Council-led Barry Communities First run a luncheon club for those aged 55 and over on the first Wednesday of every month, 12pm – 2pm at Parkside Christian Centre, St Brides Way, Barry.

Contact 01446 709432 or visit www.BarryCommunitiesFirst.org.

THE SEAGULL INN has recently benefited from an extensive redevelopment scheme which we hope will see the site become an integral part of the community of the seaside town of Porthcawl, following its opening on 17th November.

The latest addition to the Brains managed estate has had a full refurbishment of its interior and kitchen facilities, adding a fresh and modern feel to this traditional site. Care has been taken to maintain a community pub feel with the inclusion of darts, pool and Sky Sports in the bar, whilst the lounge remains an informal environment for dining and drinks with friends and family.

The pub now showcases our 'Real Pub Favourites' menu with traditional favourites such as fish and chips and homemade curry. It will also offer fantastic value with a 2 for £10 deal on selected dishes, available Monday – Friday. Food is served from midday every day and customers will also find a broad range of Brains beers and a great selection of wines.

New managers Andy and Lynette and their team look forward to welcoming you to the new look Seagull!

Present this voucher at The Seagull Inn to claim your FREE pint, glass of wine or soft drink.
(Fill in your details below to redeem)

Name:

Phone:

Postcode:

Email:

Terms and Conditions
Free drink includes a pint of any Brains beer or Foster's, a 175ml glass of wine or any draught soft drink. Offer valid from Monday 24th – Thursday 27th November 2014. Only valid at the Seagull Inn, Sandpiper Road, Porthcawl, CF36 3UT. Subject to availability. Not in conjunction with any other offer. The Seagull Inn reserves the right to withdraw this offer at any time. ☐ Please tick here if you do not wish to receive any further information from SA Brains & Co Ltd. Promoter: SA Brain & Co Ltd, CF10 5DS.

Singers' duet a Facebook hit!

WHEN singer Aubrey Parsons asked audience member Paul Dark to join him on stage for a song at the Celtic Manor recently, no one could have guessed what would happen next.

"It was like something from a film. The entire room just fell silent, all the customers turned and watched with their mouths agape. Even all the staff stopped what they were doing and became engrossed in what was happening on the stage. It was beautiful," said Carly Lewis, waitress at The Celtic Manor.

Aubrey had performed at Paul's pub, The Cornhill in Rhayader earlier in the summer as part of the town carnival: "I know Paul has a great voice, so I asked him up to sing. He was a little reluctant at first but the audience were quite insistent! I asked him if he knew 'The Prayer' and luckily enough he did," said Aubrey.

Another customer filmed the duet on his mobile phone and posted the footage to Facebook. The clip started getting thousands of hits, and the next day both Wales Online and the Daily Mirror ran stories about the performance, which helped make the video go viral.

Owing to the massive amount of interest in the video, Aubrey and Paul have since formed 'Parsons and Dark' and recorded their first single 'The Prayer', which they have self-financed. All proceeds will go to the Wales Kidney Foundation. They are also currently working on their first album together.

"This has all been like a dream come true. We have both been singing separately for years and we are both constantly being told we should try for X-Factor or BGT, but neither of us has ever had any luck with those shows.

"In fact, we are both completely fed up with the TV 'talent show culture'. It seems that unless you have a heart breaking back-story, a truly awful voice, or you are prepared to be squeezed, twisted, shoehorned and moulded into a pop band, then you really don't stand a chance on these shows."

Aubrey added: "So we've decided to join forces and give the world what we think they've been waiting for. Big songs, big voices and big shows!"

WELSH HEARTS RUN IN MEMORY OF RON

MATTHEW SMITH'S dad Ron died in August this year, aged 64, from a heart attack, and his son Jackson (7) and friends and family will be taking part in 'The Great Cardiff Bay Santa and Elf Dash' on Sunday, December 7 in his memory.

It is organised by the Welsh Hearts charity.

Matthew said: "Ron was the greatest and kindest man you could ever meet. He always put other people first and has left a massive gap in all of our lives! He will never be forgotten and he will be so proud that we will be doing this event in memory of him and helping to raise money to help Welsh Hearts buy defibrillators across Wales."

The Santa and Elf Dash is a festive event for all the family to take part in. Registration is £5 each and participants receive a T-shirt, certificate, medal, water and prizes for the best dressed Santa and Elf!

To register, contact the fundraising office on 02920 786521, or register online http://welshhearts.org/santa./

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Dathlwch 12 diwrnod y Nadolig

gyda 12 o gynigion arbennig* gan Hamdden halo

Dydd Llun
1 RHAG
Trefnwch aelodaeth o'r Ystafell Ffyrfhau yng Nghanolfan Bywyd
Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr - dim byd i'w dalu tan fis Ionawr

Dydd Mawrth
2 RHAG
20% oddi ar nwyddau Halo - bagiau ymarfer corff, poteli dw'r, tywelion chwys, ffotisau allweddi

Dydd Mercher
3 RHAG
Taleb Rhodd Halo £20 am £15 - arbedwch £5

Dydd Iau
4 RHAG
Trefnwch driniaeth harddwch yn y salon yng Nghanolfan Bywyd
Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr - 25% oddi ar y pris

Dydd Gwener
5 RHAG
Taleb nofio am ddim pan fyddwch yn prynu unrhyw gynnych nofio Zaggs

Dydd Sadwrn
6 RHAG
Prynwch aelodaeth flynyddol - 13 mis am bris 10!

Dydd Sul
7 RHAG
£10 oddi ar bris trefnu parti pen-blwydd Halo

Dydd Llun
8 RHAG
Mins-pei am ddim pan fyddwch yn prynu diod boeth yn y caffi newydd yng Nghanolfan Bywyd
Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

Dydd Mawrth
9 RHAG
Mynediad hanner pris i chwarae meddal dan do JumpINGym yng Nghanolfan Bywyd Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

Dydd Mercher
10 RHAG
Trefnwch eich sesiwn am ddim ar Halo Heights, y wal ddringo dan do yng Nghanolfan Bywyd
Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

Dydd Iau
11 RHAG
Trefnwch ddosbarth ymarfer corff mewn grw'p am ddim

Dydd Gwener
12 RHAG
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Gallwch gymryd rhan ar-lein yn www.haloleisure.org.uk/12days

Does dim rhaid ichi aros tan y Flwyddyn Newydd - dyma'r amser i ddod yn fwy heini

CYNNIG AELODAETH ARBENNIG

Trefnwch Aelodaeth Ymrwymedig Gyflawn neu Aelodaeth Ystafell Ffyrfhau yn ystod mis Rhagfyr
Dim byd i'w dalu tan fis Ionawr*

Gallwch ddefnyddio'r holl gyfleusterau ar unwaith a chewch botel ddw'r a thywel chwys Halo AM DDIM

Mae'r cynigion ar gael ar y dyddiad a nodwyd yn unig. Rhaid i archebion/taliadau gael eu gwneud ar y diwrnod i sicrhau diogwnt/cynnig - y gellir ei adennill ar ddyddiad diweddarach, gweler www.haloleisure.org.uk/12days am fanylion. **Yn agored i aelodau Halo a'r rhai nad ydynt yn aelodau.** *Telerau ac amodau yn gymwys yn www.haloleisure.org.uk/12days

Siaradwch â Chynghorydd Cwsmeriaid yn eich canolfan leol ar **0300 012 1223** neu ewch i **www.haloleisure.org.uk**

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Celebrate 12 days of Christmas

with 12 special offers* from halo® Leisure

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Take out a Toning Suite membership at Bridgend Life Centre - pay nothing until January

Tues 2 DEC
20% off Halo merchandise - workout bags, water bottles, sweat towels, key fobs

Wed 3 DEC
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Thurs 4 DEC
Book a beauty treatment at the salon at Bridgend Life Centre - 25% off

Fri 5 DEC
Free swim voucher when you buy any Zoggs swimming product

Sat 6 DEC
Buy an annual membership - 13 months for the price of 10!

Sun 7 DEC
£10 off a Halo birthday party booking

Mon 8 DEC
FREE mince pie when you buy a hot drink at the new cafe at Bridgend Life Centre

Tues 9 DEC
Half price admission to JumpINGym indoor soft play at Bridgend Life Centre

Wed 10 DEC
Book your free session on Halo Heights, the indoor climbing wall at Bridgend Life Centre

Thurs 11 DEC
Book a free group exercise class

Fri 12 DEC
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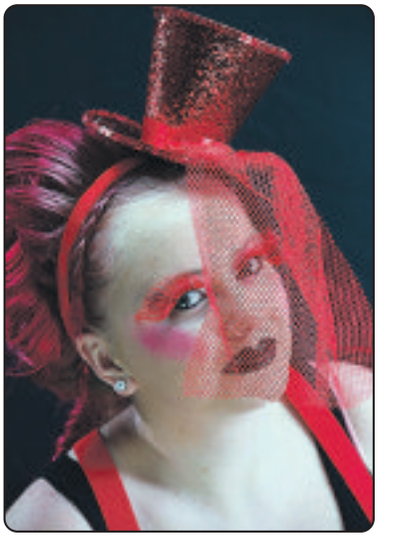
BRIDGEND STUDENT STYLISTS ROUND OFF THEIR 2014 CHALLENGE IN STYLE!

All images by
Graham Davies Photography

The students are pictured with their tutor. Left to right: Lauren Griffiths, Katie King, Elaine McCabe (tutor) Shivaunne Dawe and Alisha Corria.



THE ACT Training hair and beauty class of 2014 at Bridgend have literally rounded off the year in style by creating a range of fantastical looks to mark them gaining the final stage of their industry qualification.

Learners from ACT's Nolton Street centre in the town were given free rein to put styling skills accrued throughout the year to use in any way they wanted, and created a variety of stunning designs in the process.

From a Shakespeare-inspired fairy tale princess, to a punk–rock neon look, four students studying towards their Level 3 Apprenticeship in Hairdressing came up with a knockout series of styles to the delight of their tutor Elaine McCabe and other staff based at the centre.

The learners involved, who are otherwise employed at salons within the local area, have now progressed from their Level 1 and Level 2, to Level 3 Apprenticeships as a result. Those taking part were also supported by beauty apprentices from ACT Bridgend, who helped them by creating some striking Prom and Avante-Garde themed make-up looks as part of their coursework too.

Hairdressing tutor Elaine McCabe said: "We like to challenge our students to think outside the box and bring their creative side to the fore, and our annual catwalk task presents us with the perfect opportunity to do this.

"This year, however, we set them a photo-shoot task working alongside professional photographer Graham Davies where the learners had a full schedule on the day, with experience of working to the demands of a real photo shoot, and I was very proud of how professionally the learners worked."

ACT Training is Wales' largest training provider, providing more than 30 routes to a range of learning opportunities for young people across the country in the form of traineeships, apprenticeships and other vocational qualifications.

FLAGSHIP SALONS

For hair and beauty trainees, it operates flagship salons in Cardiff, Bridgend, Caerphilly and Wrexham, where training is delivered by tutors with big industry credentials and often a background working with some of the sector's leading celebrity names.

Staff behind the photo-shoot brief were thrilled when learners went on to create a range of mood boards, research a variety of costume looks, create and discuss budgets, and work to a time scale which lead to a variety of out of this world looks that were produced on the day.

Student Katie King, who works at the Charizma salon in Pontyclun, said: "I enjoyed organising the event and being creative, and this was a great opportunity to show my skills, so I feel much more confident now in terms of taking part in events like this in the future."

Shivaun Dawe, from Innovation Hair Design in Bettws, Bridgend, said: "The day ran smoothly and this was due to the preparation before the event, and overall I've really enjoyed my training with ACT.

"Elaine was always on hand to help with any problems and to boost our confidence, and I enjoyed working with the photographer too, who put us all at ease."

Alisha Corria, who is self-employed at Studio 15 in Talbot Green, and Lauren Griffiths, who is employed by the Coco salon in Cardiff, also took part in the exercise.

Gayle Ford, Bridgend Centre Manager, said: "It was an exciting day and fantastic to see learners and staff working together and generally having a great time. A lot of hard work went into preparing for the day which paid off, as the end result clearly shows." **JC**

Reader asks: 'WHERE ARE THEY NOW?'

GEM reader Leigh Smith writes, *"I came across this picture (left) in a dusty drawer!"*

"It shows Seabank Hotel waiting staff during summer 1961, the year that the UK Open Golf was held at the Porthcawl Golf Club near Rest Bay.

"It was a very well respected four-star hotel, which was always very busy. Gordon was the Head Waiter (out of uniform) and the sender of this image is wearing a bow tie and white jacket!"

Pupils raise cash for charity

STUDENTS at Porthcawl Comprehensive School have been praised by their headteacher after an intensive week of fundraising.

Headteacher Andrew Slade said: "I am delighted to report that following an exhaustive five days of commitment, enthusiasm and energy on the part of our students, the 'Head Team' raised almost £5,000 during Charities' Week.

"As each day went by, the fundraising gathered momentum with events such as Strictly Come Dancing, Stars in Their Eyes, Womanless Miss World, I'm a Teacher Get Me Out Of Here and Mastermind.

"A first this year was the Ice Bucket Challenge which was undertaken by senior staff on an exceptionally cold day, much to the amusement of the pupils. The keenly-anticipated fancy dress day for Children in Need on Friday, November 14 was the pinnacle of the week, with the Head Team dressing up as Jelly Beans and fundraising hard all day."

He continued: "The youth of today are often much maligned and criticised and seldom given the praise that they deserve. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our pupils and staff for contributing so wholeheartedly to this campaign and congratulate our extraordinary young people on raising this impressive amount of money for charity.

"Links with the local community are further enhanced with contributions to Ty Hafan, Latch, the RNLI and the Sandville. Donations will also be made to MNDA, Mind, LLM Fund, Touched by Cancer and the GULU Mission Initiative in Uganda.

"Very well done to you all!"

• ***See page 37 for pictures of the students on their fundraising mission.***

Pumpkins not just for Hallowe'en..

THE next meeting of the Llantwit Major Horticultural Society on Wednesday, November 26 at 7.30pm in the Llantonian Hall, will be a talk by Polly Davies.

She will give cultural tips on growing great pumpkins, and what to do with them besides carving Halloween lanterns.

The tips would also apply to other Cucurbit crops that are similar in their appearance and requirements for growth including the gourds, melons and cucumbers.

Polly, an American living in Wales for many years, will also explain how the modern USA Thanksgiving Day on November 27 has evolved, and the connection to pumpkin pie.

She will bring some pie for us to try, along with pumpkin bread, and green tomato cake, complete with hand-out recipes.

All are welcome at the Llantonian Hall, Llantwit Major, which is situated behind the library at the back of the Rugby club car park. Admission is free, and we look forward to seeing you. **EB**

A FESTIVE LOOK AT
HOLTON ROAD

Local shopping makes sense in so many ways

RIGHT: N & M Frangoulis is a great family business that has served the Barry public since 1950.

THERE'S a strong emphasis on local shopping now for very practical reasons...travelling a long way to big city centres means more time and extra costs.

Even retail parks have major frustrations, with choked car parks and long queues at the check -outs.

Barry is now better served for parking with a multi-storey car park, a carpark behind the libary and one in Thompson Street.

There are also parking bays dotted around local streets. It means people can park near the business they want – and then browse other local shops.

Many of them are family concerns like N & M Frangoulis on Thompson Street.

Being the oldest established family-owned shoe repair business in Barry it has seen a lot of changes.

When it opened in 1950 the original owner George Frangoulis soon had a reputation of taking on the most challenging shoe repairs, and making the very best 'made to measure' hand-made shoes.

The legacy continued when Nick Frangoulis took over, maintaining the high standards and expanding his services.

Nick told The GEM: "Key cutting was introduced in the early 70s which has developed and grown over the years and we are now of one of the largest key stockists, including the cutting and programming of chipped car keys.

"As well as making shoes, Frangoulis stocks the very best in British made quality shoes with brands such as Barkers, Cheaney, Padders, Trickers, to name but a few.

"We also stock a variety of high quality leather goods – including wallets, purses, passport and travel card holders.

"In recent times computerised engraving has been introduced to personalise gifts as well as stocking a range of awards trophies and Cups – together with a large range of genuine Zippo lighters which can be engraved. Other products include watch batteries, watch straps and dancewear."

*One of the town's most popular shops is **Pets R Us** on Regent Street. It's the go-to place for all your animal 'needs and feeds' whether dogs, cats or smaller animals.*

It's run by Steve Lane. He and the staff are trusted because they all have specialist knowledge in the products they sell.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 22)

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LIGHT UP THE SQUARE
KING SQUARE, BARRY
Saturday 29th November
12 noon to 5pm

Enjoy live music from All That Jazz, The Bucket Band and Wonderbrass along with the festive street entertainers. Join street artists Urban Canvas as they draw a beautiful Christmas Garland on the Square in pavement chalks and pastels.

Also... new for 2014, see the Town Hall come to life with a spectacular 3D Christmas projection display, which will take place just before the Christmas Light countdown.

The Christmas lights on the Square and on the Christmas tree will be switched on at 5pm.

LET IT SNOW
CENTRAL PARK, BARRY
Saturday 13th December
10am to 4pm

For one day only Santa and his reindeer will be coming to town!

The park will become a festive arena complete with snow, festive live music, street entertainers and Christmas play workshops and watch as artist Jon Hicks creates original and seasonal 6ft tall paintings of Santa and snowy landscapes.

CHRISTMAS MARKET
KING SQUARE, BARRY
Saturday 13th December
10am to 4pm

Barry is hosting its first Christmas Market on King Square.

Get yourself in the festive spirit and purchase some unique arts and crafts from local producers.

For further details on all events please call 01446 704737 or go to www.visitthevale.com or follow @visitthevale

A FESTIVE LOOK AT HOLTON ROAD

Kath and Sue of Fountains Tea Room, provide a warm welcome for customers.

GIFTS GALORE AT CHRISTMAS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21)

The business runs a dog-grooming service, sells all the top specialist dog foods, and has a range of Christmas toys, treats and coats.

On the corner of Regent Street and Holton Road, is La Cucina – a favourite place for people meeting up with friends.

For shoppers wanting a moment to rest weary feet, local office workers out for a lunch break or friends just meeting friends, it is the ideal place to have a meal, snack or coffee.

Ferda, the owner, explained: "We provide a relaxed, friendly, welcoming atmosphere for people.

"They appreciate the fact that we are a business here for the long term, with roots in the town."

Ferda has always provided quality food at affordable prices.

Ruckleys has everything needed for little ones up to schoolchildren.

Children's meals start at £2.50; there's a 'specials board' with the likes of sweet chili chicken stir fry at £6.25, corn beef pie at £5.95 and home-made sweet and sour chicken at £6.25.

La Cucina offers a huge range of 'hot refreshments' – a bewildering range of coffees and lattes (including ginger bread and chai lattes!) – and 'cold refreshments', milkshakes, organic juices, cokes, and sparkling water.

It also has a huge choice of toasted paninis, and 'special' paninis, sandwiches, breakfasts, bagels, jacket potatoes, salads and hot dishes.

Festive offerings will include paninis with chicken and stuffing, cranberry and grape; also, mince pies and Christmas cake.

There are tables outside if people want a puff!

La Cucina takes pride in providing quality food, served in a spotless environment.

Ferda added: "I would like to thank all my customers and wish them a very happy Christmas and festive season."

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A FESTIVE LOOK AT HOLTON ROAD

DID YOU KNOW THAT 'TECH CITY' IS ON YOUR DOORSTEP?

Gadget repair specialists Greenpoint IT.

TL Computer Systems – and Julie – deal with every sort of computer need whether it's domestic or commercial.

Did you know that Barry has its very own tech city? TL Computer Systems (Wales) Ltd and Greenpoint IT are based at 40 Holton Road and 18 Holton Road respectively.

At this time of year lots of people are thinking of buying games consoles, laptops, mobile phones and the like as Christmas presents – these guys have all the help, advice and backup you could need.

Dave Elliott of TL Computer Systems set up the company in his home in 1996 and they moved to Holton Road in 2000. The company is undergoing a complete refit which should be complete in the next few days.

Dave explained: "We deal with every computer need – both domestic and commercial. We do sales, service and support."

Do you want a computer for your home or business? Are you into gaming, art or music? Dave and the team will tailor hardware to your specific needs and will provide backup too. "Most people have an idea of the budget they want to work to and we can source the kit on that figure."

The team can supply the parts for people to build their own computers, or decide on the specification with customers and construct it for the customer to take home and plug in.

Once your computer is installed, you can even get technical support remotely. TL Computer Systems also deals in top name brands.

A few doors away, at 18 Holton Road, is Greenpoint IT – the gadget repair specialists. The company is run by Kris Price. "We've been here for just over a month, having moved from Cardiff Road where we were from 2007.

"We repair laptops, PCs, iPads, iPods, mobile phones and games consoles. All people have to do is give us a ring and we can give them a quote for the work. People can either drop the gadget in or request a collection.

"Once we've had time to look at the item we'll call the customer to confirm the cost and timescale of the repair. As soon as it's ready we'll call to let the customer know they can collect it or arrange a delivery. We also have a selection of refurbished lapstops and tablets that people can choose from.

"We've got phone and tablet cases that make ideal Christmas presents too," Kris added.

He and the team also offer IT training and business support. Pick ups and dropping off are possible throughout the Vale area

ABOVE: Wendy, Danielle and the staff at Pets R Us have great advice for all local animal lovers.

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A FESTIVE LOOK AT
HOLTON ROAD

For top advice on music and musical instruments make a trip to JPL Sound – the Barry Music Shop

JPL Sound - The Barry Music Shop has developed a reputation for honest, straightforward advice on musical instruments and equipment.

Many people want to buy a young family member a musical instrument as a Christmas gift and are tempted to purchase over the internet.

But that can cause complications when the instrument arrives and is not set up correctly. What then? Internet companies by their very nature are more distant, and the chances of speaking directly to someone to sort out a problem are remote.

Why go through all that when John and his staff can give all the expert advice needed face to face, order the item, and check everything is in good working order when it arrives.

It means there are no big Christmas Day dramas and disappointments.

The shop always has festive offers and provides excellent service because it thrives on repeat business.

JPL Sound – The Barry Music Shop is famed not just in Barry but throughout south Wales for the numerous events it supports with its sound systems, including the annual Rotary Fireworks Fiesta.

John and Sam of JPL Sound The Barry Music Shop offer the best advice on all things musical.

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Sudden death prompts probe

POLICE have confirmed that they are investigating the sudden death of a man at Southerndown on Monday.

Mr Peter Coles, aged 76, from the Litchard area of Bridgend, died around 4pm on that day and an investigation has been launched on behalf of the coroner. However, the incident is not being treated as suspicious and next of kin have been informed.

Local choir draws in 18 new voices!

Participants in the latest taster session with MD Dot Connell.

THE waves made by Barry Male Voice Choir's recent recruitment campaign have created a swell of interest in the area and the taster evening held at the West End Social Club attracted 20 potential new members.

Men from Barry, Rhoose, Dinas Powys, Wenvoe, Penarth and Llantwit Major attended.

Musical director Dorothy Connell, accompanied by Emma Arscott, led the guests through a varied programme of songs, as an introduction to male voice singing.

The stirring sounds of the combined voices of choristers and guests singing in near harmony was enjoyed by all and hopefully suggests that the choir can soon expect a number of new members. At a follow-up session, 18 potential choristers took part.

Choir president Gordon Mudford said: "Barry Male Voice Choir enriches the lives of many. I hope that the choir recruitment campaign has safeguarded the future of the choir and will allow the 112-year legacy of our predecessors to continue.

"The choir is committed to entertaining and supporting the organisations and charities of Barry and rest of the Vale. Over the years, we have raised thousands of pounds for good causes.

"We shall continue to do this. Our engaging and colourful recruiting campaign was made possible by the generous support of the Barry Town Council."

It's not too late for any men interested in joining. Just turn up at our taster sessions on Mondays at 6.30 til 7.15pm in Trinity Hall, Barry (lower floor side entrance) or at the choir rehearsals at the same venue on Mondays or Thursdays, 7.30pm – 9.30pm. Email: www.barrymalevoicechoir.co.uk.

Gareth Jones

Villagers claim abolition of settlement boundaries is 'contradictory' measure

A GROUP of villagers has written an open letter to the leader of the Vale council, claiming it is 'contradictory' that settlement boundaries are being abolished locally.

The correspondents live in St Nicholas, Ystradowen, Bonvilston, East Aberthaw, St Athan, Llanblethian and Wick.

In the letter they say: ***"We understand that The Vale Council has grave reservations about the prospect of a merger with Cardiff Council in the forthcoming reorganisation of local government in Wales.***

"In the press last month it was reported that a key reason why the Vale Council would prefer an amalgamation with Bridgend Council is that it would ensure that the rural characteristics of both the Vale and Bridgend are 'protected and enhanced for the benefit of the wider region'.

"Clearly many will welcome this emphasis given the widespread apprehension that if the Vale is absorbed into a greater Cardiff local authority, then over the next few decades the rural Vale could be subjected to excessive development in order to ease the acute shortage of building land within Cardiff.

"Given the Vale Council's position on the importance of preserving the outstanding scenic quality of our Vale rural areas, we find it anomalous that the Vale Council has proposed in its Deposit LDP to abolish the settlement boundaries around 24 villages in the Vale, particularly since Bridgend Council has kept settlement boundaries around its villages in its adopted LDP."

It has recently been announced that the Vale and Bridgend borough councils are currently considering a merger.

Tourism ambassadors go on a tour of the Vale

ON November 14 a group of participants from the Vale of Glamorgan tourism ambassador training programme departed Cowbridge on a familiarisation tour of the Vale.

As we travelled to our first destination we were delighted that the stormy weather of the past few days had given way to a day of warm autumnal sunshine.

Having enjoyed an interesting guided tour of the National Trust-run Dyffryn House and garden, our next visit was to Dr Salmon's Wells at Penllyn: here we were introduced to the history of the well, in days before piped water was introduced to the community.

Highlight of our afternoon was a visit to the Glamorgan Heritage Coast, where, in the company of a Heritage Coast ranger, we explored the attractions of Dunraven Estate, and enjoying scenic views of the spectacular cliffs and beach as we looked eastwards towards Nash Point.

With the tide departing, there was time for some beachcombing as the sun started to set. Ewenny Priory was our final destination of the day for a few moments of quiet reflection before setting off on our homeward journey.

Those who took part would like to thank Angharad Wynne and Branwen Dickson from Creative Rural Communities (Cowbridge) for organising the event. The National Trust, Glamorgan Heritage Coast Rangers, and Ewenny Priory for the welcome we received. Cresta Coaches and 'Cowbridge and Beyond' coach Tourism Project for arranging transportation.

Ian Thomas, Cardiff
(Vale Tourism Ambassador).

Lunch recital

THE autumn season of lunchtime recitals at All Saints Church comes to a close next Monday, November 24 when the final concert features conductor, opera coach and pianist Anthony Negus.

Anthony will be presenting a programme of music including pieces by Bach, Schubert, Mozart and Brahms at 1pm.

ROTARY DISTRICT 1150 GOVERNOR IS SPECIAL GUEST AT BARRY CLUB

ROTARY'S district 1150 governor, Mrs Sandra Townsend from Porthcawl, was the special guest at the Rotary Club of Barry's dinner meeting on November 13 at the Glenbrook Inn.

She spoke on the many projects Rotary are engaged in locally, nationally and internationally.

Paul Harris in 1905 had founded the Rotary movement, whose motto is *'Service above Self'*, encouraging all Rotarians to encourage people – men and women – to join Rotary to continue the good work and enjoy the fellowship that is such an important part of membership.

Barry Rotary Club's president Robin Pitcher thanked district governor Sandra for an interesting talk; part of a very busy autumn for the Barry club which earlier in the month organised the 41st annual fireworks fiesta on Barry Island soon after a successful international lunch in October, organised with the Inner Wheel Club of Barry.

Plans are now well in hand to have stalls in High Street, Barry when the Christmas lights are switched on at the end of November and to have another stall at the Dickensian evening in Dinas Powys in December.

Members will also be visiting Orchard House with Inner Wheel to hold a Christmas evening for the residents.

The Rotary Club of Barry also continues to support the Vale Foodbank with monthly donations of food and with the collecting of food at Tesco, Barry.

The club meets in the Glenbrook Inn on Thursdays (6pm for 6.30pm).

Contact Peter Battle on 01446 710204 or look online at www.ribi.org for further details.

Rotarian Ann Harrhy, president Robin Pitcher, district governor Sandra Townsend and Rotarian Jill Osborne.

Galaxy of stars in panto!

SPARKLING glass slippers, a pair of Ugly Sisters, a handsome Prince and the most popular rags-to-riches story of all time can mean only one thing – the magical pantomime *Cinderella*.

A galaxy of stars are bringing panto magic to Cardiff's New Theatre.

Any Dream Will Do winner and *Casualty* star Lee Mead will lead the cast in the role of Prince Charming.

Joining Lee is Linda Lusardi as The Fairy Godmother, Sam Kane and Mike Doyle as The Ugly Sisters, comedian Andy Jones plays Buttons and Wales' own sporting hero, Gareth Thomas takes on the role of Dandini.

Linda's many stage roles include *Funny Peculiar*, *Bedside Manner*, *Not Now Darling*, *Pygmalion* and *Rock with Laughter*; as well as countless television programmes.

Comedian and funny man Andy Jones will play the pantomime's unsung hero Buttons and *Cinderella* marks his seventh New Theatre panto appearance.

Gareth Thomas, known as 'Alfie' owing to his resemblance to a cartoon character called Alf, was the first Welsh player to reach 100 caps and is one of the most iconic and respected figures in world sport, being voted BBC Wales Sports Personality of the Year in 2005.

Jonathan Kiley, executive producer of *Cinderella* said: "This brand-new production is set to be the most spectacular Cardiff has ever seen."

Cinderella runs at the New Theatre from Saturday December 13 to Sunday, January 18. Tickets start from £10.50 with offers available for families and others. They can be booked on 029 2087 8889 or online at www.newtheatrecardiff.co.uk

No excuse for Welsh NHS to ignore cancer drugs fund requests SAYS AM

WHEN Welsh Health Minister Mark Drakeford rejected the 100,000 strong petition calling for a cancer drugs fund in a debate at the Senedd recently, he claimed that such a policy was not "popular with patients".

I challenge him to provide the evidence on which this extraordinary statement was based.

Have we had petitions coming to the Assembly demanding that the Welsh Government does not set up a fund? Do you hear people at bus stops arguing that cancer victims should not have access to the same drugs that people in England get for free?

Do people really think it's right for cancer victims to spend their life savings just to stay alive?

The answer to all these questions is a resounding 'No'. And that's not my view – it's backed up not only by those people from across Wales who signed the petition, but also the many others who have supported the fundraising efforts of cancer sufferers like Beth Margetson of Porthcawl, who have had to pay for their own treatment.

The truth is that Labour Ministers are totally out of touch with what people in Wales want. Their earlier funding cuts of £800m to the Welsh NHS are responsible for the chaos and havoc into which parts of the service are descending despite the hard work of doctors and nurses.

And let's be clear. It's not that the government cannot afford a cancer drugs fund. They spent £8m last year refurbishing the offices of ministers – enough to finance such a fund for two years. No, it's being refused on ideological grounds – because the fund in England was actually the idea of Prime Minister David Cameron.

Is Labour in Wales so bigoted that they would condemn cancer sufferers to an early death just because they will not adopt what appears to be a good idea from a party they dislike? The answer would appear to be yes.

I am sure cancer sufferers and their families do not give a stuff who first came up with this idea. The SNP-run government in Scotland has set up their own fund to pay for new medicines and in Northern Ireland, the government has decided in principle that such a fund would be a good idea and is now looking for ways to pay for it.

It is only in Wales, run by an ideology-driven, old Labour government, that this fund has been rejected out of hand.

I say to Labour – ditch the dogma because it is costing lives and start tackling the real concerns of people in Wales about the way their health services are being run.

Byron Davies,
Welsh Conservative Regional AM.

CATCH UP CLUB

VALE Council-led Barry Communities First is running a Catch Up Club for children aged 10 – 13 years old in the town.

It will be a place to meet friends, catch up on homework, use computers or to take part in fun activities such as games, arts and crafts during term time every Tuesday at The People Centre, Dunlin Court at 3.30pm – 5.30pm; and every Thursday at Parkside Christian Centre, St Brides Way, 3.30pm – 5.30pm.

Contact 01446 709432 or visit www.BarryCommunitiesFirst.org.

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FENSA Yale

Cumberbatch cracks code and Turing in 'The Imitation Game'

by GARETH JAMIESON
Follow Screen Talk on Twitter – @GEMScreenTalk

HAVING established himself with well-received roles in the likes of *Atonement* and portraying Stephen Hawking in 2004's *Hawking*, Benedict Cumberbatch's star has firmly moved into the ascendance, giving the second best 21st century iteration of Sherlock Holmes, and taking the step up into the big leagues in the likes of the *The Hobbit* trilogy and playing (spoiler alert) Khan in last year's *Star Trek: Into Darkness*.

Cumberbatch's latest role sees him portray Alan Turing in *The Imitation Game*, the man who, along with a group of fellow intellectuals, was involved in cracking the Enigma code at Bletchley Park during World War Two.

The film covers three periods of his life – his teenage years at boarding school, his work on the code-breaking machine and the aftermath of the war that saw him convicted for being a homosexual...

About 10 minutes into *The Imitation Game*, you get a slight sense of deja vu; Benedict Cumberbatch is playing the smartest man in the room, a man whose social skills leave plenty to be desired and isn't afraid of offending in order to get what he wants – so far, so Sherlock. However, come the closing credits, you find yourself as far removed from the great detective as you could be, the central performance by Cumberbatch layered and intriguing, cold yet human; it may very well be his best performance yet.

The story of the Enigma code-breakers was last told on screen in 2001's rather lamentable *Enigma*, a film that tried to make an action blockbuster out of the rural surroundings of Milton Keynes; *The Imitation Game* is a far different beast altogether, focused more on the character of Alan Turing than the code breaking that affirmed his genius.

Directed by *Headhunters'* Morten Tyldum, and based on Andrew Hodges' book (the script coming from Graham Moore), we meet Turing during the years that saw the 'odd duck', as he refers to himself, grow up under oppression from school bullies, to the zenith of breaking the Enigma code, and the decline of a man suffering from oppression of a different, yet oddly similar, sort.

With the plot zigzagging between the three sections of his life, Tyldum manages to maintain momentum through the story. If he is a little let down by some CGI warfare, what he does do well is bring the same cool, efficient approach that served him so well with *Headhunters*.

The film may have a something of a Sunday night TV movie about it, but Tyldum's direction means it fits the big screen wonderfully well.

Moore's script is zippy, the race-against-time of cracking the code central to the plot, with sharp and witty dialogue that gives the film a wit to go with its dramatic foundations.

It grips from the off, particularly for those not so versed in either the life of Turing or the events at Bletchley Park, and Moore manages to strip back the story to its vital components, yet fill it with richly drawn characters and superb dialogue. His balancing act between the three story strands is impressive, as is his ability to allow the film to serve as both thriller and character study.

It's Cumberbatch's performance that will draw the most plaudits, and while this isn't a case of performance overshadowing the film, it says much that without his central turn you wouldn't be quite so enveloped.

Turing's intelligence left him feeling distant from those around him and Cumberbatch manages not only to portray his great intelligence, but also hint at the hurt that is masked by his genius.

For a man so enthralled by the concept of computers there is something of the automaton about Cumberbatch's Turing, feeling and emotion masked by logic.

As an actor who has nary put a foot wrong thus far in his high-profile outings, this easily marks Cumberbatch's most impressive turn yet.

Around him, Keira Knightley offers a pleasing support, and if her character doesn't wholly convince, the performance makes up for it; while the likes of the underrated Matthew Goode, Charles Dance, Rory Kinnear and Mark Strong all bring a stiff upper lip.

Come the saddening denouement, you're left with a selective overview of a man's life that some may feel doesn't paint the complete picture; however, the narrative choices made by Moore and Tyldum pay dividends as *The Imitation Game* packs quite the punch.

VERDICT: A superb look at a complicated, repressed genius, *The Imitation Game* is an engrossing film that soars, thanks to Benedict Cumberbatch's outstanding lead performance. Graham Moore's script is stripped back but rich with detail and Morten Tyldum's direction impressive, but it's Cumberbatch's performance that rightly steals the show here. *Highly recommended*.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (2011), *A Beautiful Mind* (2001).

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Weight loss regime has changed one local woman's life

ABOVE: Jacklyn before (on left) and after!

A LOCAL woman has praised the weight loss course regime that she says has made her "healthier than she's been for 12 years".

Jacklyn Hartnett signed up for a course with Sculpts Supplements in Barry after years of putting on weight – mainly due to health problems that stoped her exercising.

She said: "I have been physically disabled with spinal damage since 2002, and have had a lung disease since 2012.

"I need to take 48 tablets (including morphine and steroids) but more importantly, I am unable to walk more than 10 metres.

"Exercise and going to the gym is impossible for me. Over the last 12 years, the weight piled on, while I tried every diet going, with zero results.

"In June this year, I weighed a massive 18 stone, 8 lbs, and it was then that I was introduced to Sculpt Supplements.

"I thought it would be another waste of money but, with constant support from the team, I lost weight in that first month.

"With no calorie counting, just sensible healthy eating tips from the team, every time I went on the scales my weight went down. My clothes were starting to hang off me.

"I had never had results like this – and you even get a 'cheat day'.

"Today, I'm healthier than I've been in 12 years, and have gone from a size 24 to a size 16. I now weigh 15 stone 6 lbs.

"If it works for me it could work for you. Thanks to Sculpt Supplements team, I'm getting my life – but more importantly my confidence – back!"

** Seek medical advice before starting a diet/exercise programme.*

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Mr J Hall

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David Burr

"I am extremely grateful for all the help and up to date information I have received from this excellent firm."
Mrs J Thorpe

Residents scoop eco awards

Eco champion winners Oak Court Gardening Club, of the Vale of Glamorgan with Richard Poole, of category sponsors Contour, and Kathy Smart, chair of the board of WWH.

VALE residents have been recognised for the positive impact they have made on their communities by landlord, Wales & West Housing, at its annual Making a Difference Awards.

Oak Court residents scooped the Eco Champion category and The Buzzy, Buzzy Bees Gardening Club in Hanover Court, Barry were finalists in the same category which was sponsored by Contour Showers.

Oak Court gardening group consists of a few keen gardeners who have only been working together for a short time but already their efforts have made a huge difference to the grounds around their home.

Also nominated for the Eco Champion Award by Sarah Willcox, the Buzzy, Buzzy Bees are a group of residents from Hanover Court retirement scheme in Barry, who have formed a group to grow fruit and vegetables at the scheme to improve their lifestyle through healthy eating.

Buzzy, Buzzy Bees Gardening Club, Vale of Glamorgan with Richard Poole, of Eco Champion category sponsors Contour, and Kathy Smart, chair of the board of WWH.

NEWS FROM FONMON APIARY

Beware of the Drone-laying Queen!

AUTUMN is here for sure, the varied conditions are bringing about a slow-down within the colonies, but the bees are still getting out and about foraging.

The Queens are still laying, which means new bees hatching out and the dynamics of the hives are still changing. Although I have carried out Varroa mite control, this continued Queen laying can only lead to more mites developing and I will have to look to revising my treatment schedule.

Honey supers (boxes) that were taken off and their contents, spun out, were put back onto the hives so that the bees could clean them up. I would then remove them and put them into storage ready for use next year. The bees obligingly cleaned them but have proceeded to fill them with nectar and pollen due to this somewhat unseasonable weather pattern that we are in the grip of.

What shall I do? Well, normal procedure is to remove the Queen excluders, this has been done; each colony would be left with one deep box (brood box) and one shallow box (honey super) containing stores (sealed over honey and pollen). This set-up would be sufficient to carry them through the winter months.

However, I now have several colonies that have two supers and some with three supers on them. Not all of the frames within these supers are quite full yet, but if the mild conditions continue and the bees remain active who know.

I could well be taking honey off come Christmas. An unlikely scenario, I admit, but certainly not impossible.

The activity of the bees and the weather conditions will, of course, be the deciding factors. It has to be recognised that this year for the beekeeper has certainly been different.

Swarms have certainly been a feature this year. This has seen the production of new Queens. These Queens must be mated if they are to fulfil their role as providers of the next generation of bees – many reports are suggesting otherwise.

For whatever reason, many Queens have failed to be mated and this then leaves a colony with a Drone-laying Queen and this spells doom for such a colony.

Workers (females) are a must if a colony is to survive. It is the ladies who do all of the work in a hive. Drones are there to mate with Queens and that is their only function.

At this time of the year, the only thing going to plan is the removal of all Drones; the ladies are removing them from the hive, they are dragged out and not allowed to return inside and, as a consequence, they die of starvation or eventually the cold.

There should be no swarms in the winter, but will we get a winter? Will the ladies let a few Drones survive?

I am listening to the weather reports diligently. The bees, of course, will be the better indicators and they (as always) will know just how to go about things.

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Understanding Disability awards presented

Leo Taylor.Photographs by Tim Dickeson

Joe Brady

THE Understanding Disability Group was celebrating 21 years at an awards ceremony on Tuesday (November 18) at the Future Inn Hotel in Cardiff Bay.

There were seven main award recipients, including Joe Brady from Barry, who received an award in the children's category for supporting and welcoming an autistic young boy into their home for two nights a month.

The Lord Mayor of Cardiff, Coun Margaret Jones and Deputy Lord Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan, Coun Fred Johnson, presented awards and Maria Battle, Chair of the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board spoke on the Learning Disability services with the health board.

Volunteers sought for Operation Christmas Child

A REQUEST has been made to The GEM for volunteers to assist with the checking of shoeboxes in connection with this year's Operation Christmas Child shoebox campaign.

The warehouse being used this year is Unit 39C on the Vale Business Park at Llandow, Cowbridge CF71 7PF. Those interested in helping are asked to turn up at the warehouse where Mr and Mrs Ted Bird, Mr and Mrs Roy Hibbert and Mrs Leanne Popham are heading up the operation.

Last year, over 25,000 boxes were collected in south Wales and sent off to children in a number of east European countries. This year, the shoeboxes collected in the south Wales region will be sent to children in Zambia and, hopefully, last year's figure will be exceeded.

For a small donation supplies of ready wrapped empty boxes are available at the warehouse open from 10am until 9pm each day.

OPEN SCHOOL IN PENARTH

WESTBOURNE School, Penarth is opening its doors to the public today (Thursday, November 20) between 4pm and 6pm.

Cardiff flights boost to Norway

UK AIRLINE, Eastern Airways has signed a new codeshare agreement with Wideroe, which will also provide Cardiff Airport travellers with greater Norwegian connections via Aberdeen, along with improved access to the Norwegian carrier's comprehensive network of Scandinavian destinations.

The codeshare partnership and ticketing agreement will enable Eastern Airways to offer connections from Cardiff to Stavanger and Bergen via Aberdeen. Passengers' hold baggage will be checked in at Cardiff and collected at their end destination, a spokesperson said.

The 'Big Wrap' holds quiz for a big Christmas

CHARITY organisation The Big Wrap will be hosting a Big Quiz to help support disadvantaged children and young people across south Wales this Christmas.

The quiz will be held at the Ship Hotel on Harbour Road, Barry, on Tuesday, November 25 at 7.30pm. Teams of four to six people are welcome to compete, and all proceeds will go towards helping give deprived people a helping hand this Christmas.

Last year, thanks to the support of the Vale Council and Cardiff City Football Club and its fans, over 500 children were supported by the Big Wrap scheme.

And this year the charity is looking to help even more people enjoy a generous Christmas.

The Big Wrap is happy to receive toys, which should be new and unwrapped, as well as gift tokens or financial donations.

Donations can be taken to the Vale Civic Offices on Holton Road, Barryup until December 12. They can also be made at the Cardiff City club shop any time until December 12.

Susan Lloyd-Selby, the Big Wrap coordinator, said: "We are delighted to be running the Big Wrap in partnership with the Vale Council and Cardiff City Football Club again this year.

Every present we receive will be given to a child or young person who might otherwise receive nothing or very little for Christmas.

We would like to thank the Council, the team and its supporters in advance. With your help, we can make sure Christmas reaches even more children this year."

Working in partnership with local agencies, the Big Wrap is run by volunteers and relies entirely on donations from local organisations and members of the public.

Presents will be given to children and young people identified by front line care professionals, including social workers, local charities and churches.

For more information on the scheme, or how to get involved, visit www.bigwrap.co.uk.

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When looking at replacement windows and doors, as tempting as it is to focus on the aesthetic design, technology vitally important.

Up to 30 per cent of your home's heat loss can be through the windows, so style must be backed up with substance. To shop smart, it's important to get to grips with Window Energy Ratings (WER).

Similar to the ratings found on home appliances, WER ranges from A (meaning most energy efficient) down to G. UK building regulations stipulate a 'C' rating as the standard window rating expected in modern homes.

With windows and doors, as in many areas of life, technology moves on quickly. Just five years ago doors and windows were installed that today would not achieve a C rating. In fact, a window or door installed five years ago could be around 30 per cent less efficient than one installed today.

Opting for A rated windows will minimise your carbon footprint and reduce your energy bills meaning a better return on your home improvement investment. And for the ultimate future proofing, the Ambient Window can achieve an A+ rating.

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- Reduced condensation: Energy-efficient glazing reduces condensation build-up on the inside of windows.

Llantwit Major at Christmas

Impressive coastal town has the Christmas spirit all year round!

LLANTWIT IS NOT JUST A PRETTY FACE...

A LOOK INSIDE LLANTWIT MAJOR BY CAROLINE SARLL

POSTCARD-PRETTY and postcode-proud (recently dubbed the second best place to live in Wales), Llantwit Major provides the perfect blend of residential, retail and rustic charm.

If you can't face the pre-Christmas clamour and blatant big-city consumerism, fancying something other than chainstore fodder, the plethora of quirky and quaint shops offer unusual gifts galore.

And more. The third largest town in the Vale, after Barry and Penarth, Llanilltud Fawr (its Welsh name) is host to a bundle of boasts. Once described as the 'Oxbridge of post-Roman Britain', it is believed, for one, to be Britain's earliest centre of learning.

The Celtic monastery and college of Cor Tewdws, established c395, on the site of St Illtud's Church ("the most beautiful church in Wales" according to John Wesley), was reopened in the 6th century by the Welsh monk Illtud (after whom the town is named), eventually attracting almost 2,000 pupils, including such luminaries as St David and St Patrick. Bet you didn't know that.

Vying with Cowbridge in the noteworthy names tally, neighbouring St Donat's Castle, under the ownership of William Randolph Hearst, also attracted many celebrities to the media mogul's lavish society parties: Charlie Chaplin, Clark Gable, Bob Hope and John F Kennedy amongst them.

Describing the castle, George Bernard Shaw observed: "This is what God would have built, if he had had the money".

Around Llantwit there is also the rugged, cliff-edged beach, blue plaques aplenty, a revamped Co-op (Truly Irresistible) and, last but not least, for a good old personal endorsement – my sister chose to live there.

An arbiter of good taste (her house once featured in *Traditional Homes* magazine!) and a real Llantwit lover – you can't get a better thumbs up than that.

So for me, a Christmas trip to Llantwit Major is a must: a See-Sis-Retail-Bliss combo.

Perfect!

I started this year's festive browse in the recently relaunched Co-op, drawn to it by the waft of bagels and buns from the newly enhanced bakery section (and the promise of a truly irresistible complimentary carrot cake).

Guided round the bright, balloon-festooned store, with its neatly-stacked, brightly-lit, energy-saving cabinets (extending their chilled produce), by managers Robert Sperduty and Andrew Jenkins, the £400,000 refit, with its 'cosier' lower ceiling and 'fair and square' marketing, was clearly a crowd magnet, fully embracing the area's strong community spirit – in evidence in all the businesses I visited.

The Co-op's Sharon Boult, a Community Pioneer at the store, will be working even more closely with local charities and other organisations, offering both financial and pastoral support.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

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Llantwit Major at Christmas

On the doorstep, yet so much to offer...

Stuart Sloan and Becki Croney from Sloan & Co.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29)

Sharon says: "The Co-op is membership-owned and we remain focused on giving as much back to the community as possible."

Robert said: "We are delighted with this significant investment in Llantwit Major".

As well as encouraging charity bag-packing and other in-store fundraising ventures for local groups, Sharon will also go out to help, visiting local schools and other organisations.

The reorganised store got the thumbs-up from shoppers: "I'm in here almost daily," said Helen Brown, who works in Eryl surgery.

"I prefer to shop locally. It's handy and convenient and this refit seems to include a wider selection. It's very inviting."

Annie Durrant agreed: "I live in Boverton, so always come here. Everyone is very friendly and it stocks most of the things I need."

Almost licking the cake-festooned cover of the instore mag on the way out, I intend making its Veggie blue cheese, chestnut and pear tarts and Christmas pud ice-cream for our festive feast. Mmmmm. So "good with fud" (Scottish accent, please). Loved By Us, indeed.

Anticipating the need for a crocheted Christmas kaftan to cover such calorific, scrumptious indulgence, I then waddled to the warm and welcoming Sewing Box, which was hosting its cosy Thursday Knit and Natter group.

Free tea, a good old gossip and gorgeous woolly garments galore. What more could you want?

Owner Stephen Segal and his wife Lynette Warren are celebrating their second year of being in this prime location and are unequivocal about their tailor-made (ouch) recipe for success: "We are competitively priced and have a wide range of wools and curtains to suit all tastes and budgets," says Stephen.

"Lynette and I have a passion for colour and texture and stock prestigious names such as Sanderson, William Morris and Bellfield.

"We also offer a free measuring and curtain-hanging service, seeing all sales through from start to finish. I hate to sound X-factor-ish, but it's nice to be on the customers' 'journey' with them! It's that personal touch which makes customers keep coming back, rather than travelling into Cardiff."

That and a thriving alterations service, vital in our current economic climate, which is seeing more and more people return to the make-do-and-mend mentality. The shop also supports local charity Atal Y Fro (which aims to combat domestic abuse) and regular knit and natterers Trisha, Denise, Dee and Cathy have made umpteen baby hats and jackets to raise funds and awareness.

"We'll be having a special mulled wine gathering in the run-up to Christmas and making even more baby items," says Lynette. The new Pitter-Patter club, you could say. Sew appealing...

Creativity is in abundance in the town. Mariette's, owned by artist Sara Llewellyn, specialises in hand-painted antique furniture, much of which is imported directly from France.

Helen Brown open the newly refurbished Co Op.

Sara painstakingly and expertly upcycles the beautiful vintage pieces in her upstairs studio, skilfully transforming a wide range of items from exquisite dining tables and 19th century walnut chairs to armoires and chests of drawers.

Sara is happy for customers to bring in their own furniture to be custom-painted by her and she also sells a wide range of unpainted pieces. Her rustic benches and tables are stunning, as are the artisan wooden bowls by a local Merthyr Mawr artist, reasonably priced and ideal as Christmas gifts.

"I am more than happy for clients to come and watch me work," says Sara. "This is, after all, a working studio, more than a traditional shop, so customers will generally find me in my painting clothes. I think it's interesting for them to see how the artwork develops.

"I welcome all customers and am also happy to see people by appointment, as this gives customers more time to discuss their requirements in detail. It is enormously gratifying at the end of the process to see them leave with a totally unique piece of furniture."

Sara, who describes her business as "Vintage home and Welsh artisan," also sells exclusive Welsh art and prints, including original paintings by her late mother. The Childhood In Wales series, inspired by her mother's rural upbringing, is really beautiful.

Mariette's is open from 10am to 4pm, or by appointment. Some have described Mariette's as Llantwit's "best kept secret". I think they may be right.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

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Llantwit Major at Christmas

The Flower Shop also stocks a range of gifts.

The 'Knit and Natter' group at the Sewing Box.

Variety is the key

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30)

Brick and click retailing, where businesses combine face-to-face and online sales, is not routine in small towns like Llantwit. But Stuart Sloan, the cheery and utterly charming owner of the fashion Sloan & Co, thrives on this strategy.

Bang in the town centre, his inviting and colour-blocked shopfloor offers a delightful array of sensibly priced, super-stylish separates, including the sassy and figure-flattering Saloos label.

Stuart's expertise ("I've worked in retail all my life") and his sales-savvy approach ("I'm not afraid to say we're like the Aldi of the clothes world – a classy budget boutique!") has ensured him a constant customer base from all over the world (Scandinavia, the States and Dubai) and he repays their loyalty with a discount 'Friends' card – black (clever), to echo the more well-known status credit cards.

A warm welcome awaits at Health Conscious.

This man knows about marketing and can reel off succulent soundbites in consummate – and highly convincing – adman style: "We multi-season (love it) and see ourselves as everyone's Guilty Little Pleasure. Our range is high-end, but affordable, but not so ubiquitous that you'd see someone else wearing your outfit."

Crucial, ladies. Nothing worse than fashion snap at this year's office bash: "We also favour assisted self-service (do NOT make that an acronym), allowing the customers the freedom to choose, but stepping in if they need help. Good customer service is always King".

Spot on, Stuart. We girls can't abide a hard-sell salesperson, but often need a guiding hand (or help getting out of a yes-it-will-fit-me size 8 dress). *Trends for this Christmas, then?*

"Our fab range of Italian multi-coloured coats – a snip at £59.99. And our Christmas jumpers, at £14.99".

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 32)

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE ORDER, SECTION 16A ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984

LLANTWIT MAJOR CHRISTMAS EVENT

SATURDAY 6th DECEMBER 2014

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Vale of Glamorgan Council have made an order under Section 16A Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as follows:-

WHEREAS during certain hours of the day and date specified in columns 1 of the Schedule hereto the streets or part thereof listed in column 2 of the said schedule will be used for the holding of a relevant event as described in Section 16(A)(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the Council, pursuant to the powers conferred by Section 16A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 do **HEREBY ORDER AND DIRECT** in order to facilitate the holding of the event, enable members of the public to watch the said event and to reduce the disruption to traffic likely to be caused by the event the following regulation shall be observed:-

THAT, except as provided by the order, the said streets or parts thereof shall be closed to all vehicular traffic including pedal cycles with the exception of Emergency Services and Coastguard vehicles between the hours specified in column 3 of the said schedule. The penalty for infringement of the said regulation is a fine not exceeding £1000.00

Schedule

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Saturday 6th December 2014	**Wine Street**, south of Wesley Street **Church Street**, throughout its length **Church Lane**, throughout its length **College Gardens**, throughout its length **College Street**, throughout its length The un-named lane that runs through the Town Hall car park from its junction with Church Street (next to the Town Hall) in a south westerly direction through the car park to the south eastern boundary of a property known as the Old Bakehouse. **Colhugh Street** from its junctions with **Church Street** for a distance of 40m. in a southerly direction. **Burial Lane**, throughout its length **The Strand**, to the west of Commercial Street	From 2.00pm To 9.00pm

Local signed diversions shall be in place.

Dated this 20th day of November 2014

M. E. Punter, Director of Visible Services & Housing
Vale of Glamorgan Council,
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Llantwit Major at Christmas

Llantwit Major offers a cure for choice fatigue!

LLANTWIT MAJOR, like the other towns in the Vale and Bridgend county borough, scores high on individuality, niche knick-knackery and all-year-round niceties. For me, it also eradicates that most insidious of modern day retail-related ailments: choice fatigue, writes CAROLINE SARLL.

Just how many brands of mince pies and scented candles do you want? Christmas shopping is stressful enough without traipsing up and down a multi-manufacturer mall, wondering whether one make is ten pence cheaper than another.

Small is, indeed, beautiful. But, if you do find yourself getting frazzled and frayed, rest assured that Llantwit (it's okay – the locals drop the Major too) has a healing heart – as demonstrated in many of its businesses.

The delightful Health Conscious, owned by former pharmacist and committed altruist Nicky Foster, is yet another example: "My passion is helping people. Helping them to understand that there are other ways of managing their health and dealing with problems than just with prescription drugs.

"We're all stressed these days and our Western lifestyle and foods are compromising our immune systems. We need to use more natural methods of combating disease and illness".

Nicky offers advice regarding the wealth of supplements and vitamins around. "There's no need to take them all! But most of us have too little magnesium and vitamin D, so those are the ones I'm inclined to recommend".

Nicky is also "very excited" about her Flower Power Organics range – 'artisan skincare', comprising soaps, salves, oils and creams, all produced from herbs and flowers grown in Pembrokeshire and "very useful" in fighting the festive frenzy.

She is also an advocate of Yogi teas and the accompanying recipe book, which can be used in everyday baking.

"Rose blueberry muffins are a favourite of the staff here. You open a rose teabag and add it to the muffin mix. They are scrumptious!"

Other products suitable for Christmas gifts include bars of uncooked Rawr chocolate: "It has more health benefits eaten like this," says Nicky.

Also on offer are hand-picked hampers, giving customers control over both choice and budget. "We'll gift wrap them as well, eliminating that perennial stress".

Utter bliss. On Christmas Eve, stuff sellotape and scissors (not the turkey). Open some bubbly and admire Nicky's cellophane and be-ribboned baskets instead.

Chocolate, muffins and bubbly. Gastronomic Heaven. But combined with all the puds and pies, probably not brilliant for the teeth. Cue Wyndham House Dental Practice, a 21st century all-seasons saviour for our sugar-seeped none-too-saintly sins.

Now in its 13th year, this state-of-the-art service specialises in the burgeoning implant sector. "Our implants are very competitively priced," says practice founder, dentist Simon Hill, "as are all our other treatments, such as tooth whitening and all kinds of cosmetic dentistry".

Implants are becoming more and more popular with patients, offering an aesthetically pleasing alternative to bridges or gummy smiles and gaps. The practice also prides itself on its in-house orthodontic service, enabling the expert, welcoming and reassuring team to provide all-round mouth maintenance to adults and children alike.

Wyndham has come a long way from its humble beginnings, when it opened "as a squat practice, with no patients on our books at all".

But it all went well, with no teething troubles (sorry) and now this informal, friendly practice provides "predictable quality dentistry" and "mouth rehabilitation" with a refreshingly non-clinical approach.

"We take away the fear factor by getting to know all our patients and treating them as people". Simon also provides the St Donat's-style celebrity touch I had not yet uncovered in Llantwit.

"I used to be an international rugby player," he says modestly, omitting to tell me that he won 12 caps for Wales. "I played with the likes of Mike Hall and Nigel Walker and even shared a room with Gareth Thomas on a South African tour".

Simon has also had dinner with the lovely Katherine Jenkins – "in a group, mind, not just the two of us". These days, Simon prefers to combine his dentistry with rugby coaching for Llantwit Major RFC First XV and with such a demanding life, enjoys spending time with his wife and their three children.

The million dollar question – did he survive his rugby years without injury, especially to his teeth? "Not quite. I do have an arthritic knee caused by a torn cruciate ligament. But the teeth, yes. Thanks to good gum shields, they're miraculously all intact".

I put the phone down, then rush to clean and floss my teeth. I can feel myself booking a consultation already.

Value Added Service is in abundance in The Flower Shop, owned by Sarah Thomas and co-run by her lovely mum, Wendy Thomas: "As well as celebratory occasions, we obviously do a lot of arrangements for funerals, so we are dealing regularly with bereaved customers. We pride ourselves on being understanding and allowing people to talk about their loss".

Wendy's warm, smiling face belies a personal background tinged with deep sadness: "My husband died when Sarah was just 9, so we can fully empathise with those who are going through such a devastating experience. I think they open up to us, knowing that we really do understand".

The Flower Shop stocks a wide range of fresh flowers – lisianthus, Kermit crysanths and beautiful roses were on display – all sourced from a leading Welsh supplier, J&E Ltd of Merthyr Tydfil.

This month, they are proud to be celebrating 20 years in business, an occasion they marked quietly with, of course, a stunning bunch of flowers!

Wendy is keen to emphasise the feelgood factor of the floral business: "I love doing the deliveries for occasions like Mother's Day, seeing the mums' faces when they get their beautiful bouquets. We do straddle two worlds here – the happy and the sad. Luckily, the former outweighs the latter".

As well as an array of tailor-made Christmas floral displays, the shop also stocks a wide range of reasonably priced, gorgeous gifts, ranging from seasonal mugs (only £2.99!) to the popular hand-painted, on-trend twig trees, a sign perhaps that – pun permitted – branching out is key to their ongoing success.

I left Wendy feeling pensive, but thoroughly uplifted: a massage for the soul.

There is no shortage of eateries in the town. The old town boasts a bevy of pubs, including the 16th century Old Swan Inn. There are also plenty of cafes and restaurants, offering a wide range of cuisine from traditional Welsh produce to Italian and Indian fayre and all sorts of tempting teashops with delicious cakes and pastries.

It is worth remembering, however, that there is plenty on offer just outside Llantwit, in the many surrounding villages. Lorna Powell and her husband Dean are gearing up for a busy Christmas in their recently refurbished Bar 365 near Llanmaes.

"We reopened on October 17, after a top-to-toe refurb, which took us three months. It looks amazing and we are really pleased with the new look".

Primarily a bar, offering a wide range of drinks and regular live music (Sker Krows on November 29, Underdogs on December 20), Lorna is keen to stress that they will also be offering a good old Sunday lunch. "We're interviewing for chefs at the moment and welcome all applicants."

Once the appointment has been made, Lorna is confident that they will soon be able to offer weekday meals, both at lunchtime and in the evening.

With Llanmaes winning the Vale's Best Kept Village on at least eight occasions, Bar 365 is well worth a visit.

The Plaza Toymaster store is hosting the Scout post service.

Health Conscious has an extensive product range.

Local shopping takes the strain out of Christmas!

Simon Hill and staff at the Wyndham House Dental Practice.

ABOVE: A wide choice of books at Nickleby's.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

Regular Sandy Browne, a volunteer at St Illtyd's Primary, snaps one up in her lunchbreak: "It'll be great for assemblies. The pupils will love it – and I love this shop!"

Back home, Stuart mails me with more helpful info, including their free wrap service. Tons of silky tissue paper and shiny red bags, finished, no doubt, with those curly-twirly ribbons, like Bonnie Langford's hair. The eponymous Mr Sloan (fortunate to be minus the "e" of his hapless TV counterpart and London's Eighties' rich-kids) is right on the money in his approach. And then there's maroon.

"Don't forget maroon," he enthuses, as I leave the shop. "It's so stylish". Aah. The magic of maroon. The mellifluous magic of Sloan & Co. Well worth a visit.

A few doors down is another famous-name shop, Nickleby's bookshop. Yet there is nothing Dickensian about this well-stocked store, which carries all the latest titles – David Walliams (*Awful Auntie*), Jeff Kinney (*Diary of A Wimpy Kid*), Gareth Thomas (the autobiographical *Proud*) – and is managing to survive amidst the fierce cut-price superstore competition, due to several factors.

"We've tried to remain just a bookstore. Diversifying is fine and we have diaries and cards, but the books are paramount. And we will go to any lengths – within reason! – to get a book for a customer," says the avuncular, highly knowledgeable John Woods, father of owner Rebecca Lloyd James.

John was once in charge of the libraries for BCBC and feeds this expertise and his natural love of books into his new job.

"One member of staff, Cath, is also an ex-librarian, so we pride ourselves in having the right backgrounds, as well as a heartfelt passion for books and reading. Kindles are great, but you can't beat the smell and texture of a book.

"Our Christmas bestseller is the Llantwit Major series from the local History Society. We have built up a very loyal customer base over the 20-plus years we've been in business and people know that we will always go that extra mile for them."

Astoundingly, that includes offering a customer service which goes way beyond the course of duty and which sets Nickleby's apart: pastoral care.

"We have lots of elderly customers who have been coming here for years. Many of them have mobility issues, so if they can't get out to buy something – any item, not just books – we will offer to go and get it for them. A few years ago, I bought a chicken brick for a 94-year-old customer to cook his Christmas turkey in. He was so grateful. It's the least we can do.

"We treat each and every customer as very important." You can't get better than that. Christmas spirit all year round. Relationship-retailing at its best. Top marks, Llantwit Major.

Finally, as Christmas approaches, there are seasonal activities in the town. The Toymaster Plaza will be hosting Santa and his Reindeer on Saturday, November 29, 11am to 2pm.

Also, on December 6, 2pm to 8pm, the town's Christmas event will offer entertainment in the streets.

Included will be a lantern parade, the switching on of the Christmas lights, a stage, bands, choirs, a Nativity, food, stalls, and entertainment, giving even more reasons to visit Llantwit Major this festive season!

Plaid's light switch-off warning

PLAID CYMRU councillors have repeated concerns over proposals to switch off 70 per cent of Vale of Glamorgan street lights at midnight from next April.

Plaid Cymru councillor Shirley Hodges, leader of Plaid on Barry Town Council, warned that women would feel less safe late at night and that there could be an increase in crime if more than two-thirds of lights are switched off.

The warnings come as figures showed that Wales had suffered an increase in crime during the past year.

Coun Hodges asked whether additional police resources would be made available late at night to protect the public and deal with any problems.

Coun Hodges said: "The proposed street light switch-off will concern many people who have to be out late at night or early in the morning, for whatever reason.

"This will include those who work shifts or have to be in work at all hours, such as hospital staff.

"Although the switch-off will start in the spring and summer when it is light quite early, many people will find themselves going to work in absolute dark during the winter.

"Women, in particular, will feel less safe and more threatened by a street light switch-off."

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Was Ruth Ellis victim of establishment plot?

DINAS POWYS PROBUS CLUB

ON Tuesday, November 11, retired Police Inspector George Brady spoke to the club members, his subject being '*Ruth Ellis, the untold story – victim or villain*?'

After retirement, George became a private investigator and carried out several commissions on behalf of Cardiff solicitor Bernard de Maid.

The Criminal Review Commission permitted the retrospective study of cases where there was a possibility of a miscarriage of justice, and Bernard de Maid asked George to look into the whole situation.

Ruth was born in Rhyl in 1926, to a Belgian mother and an English father, and had a sister who is still alive.

At the age of only 16, she gave birth to a son, the father being a Canadian soldier who deserted her.

She later fell in with Maurice Connelly, who owned a series of illicit drinking clubs in the West End of London.

Her job was to entice men into the club and then encourage them to buy drinks. She also earned extra money by glamour and fashion modelling.

At the age of 23, Ruth married George Ellis, a 41-year-old alcoholic dentist, but the marriage lasted only two years. In 1952, she starred in a film *Lady Godiva Rides Again*, with Joan Collins and Diana Dors.

At the Carrol Club in London, she met and fell in love with David Blakely, an amateur racing driver, public schoolboy and wastrel, the son of a Yorkshire GP who had been acquitted of murdering his wife with a toxic substance.

She supported him and his mechanic with her earnings as a hostess and model.

In April 1955, he went to Le Mans to race, but on his return failed to contact her.

She had suffered a miscarriage two weeks earlier after he had punched her in the stomach, and she had been drinking heavily while he was away.

She found him in The Magdala public house and when he came out to talk to her, she shot him several times with a .38 Smith & Wesson pistol that a man had given her that day.

An off-duty policeman came out of the pub and arrested her. She was questioned by the police, without a solicitor being present, and admitted the killing. The wall of the pub still has two bullet marks.

At the Old Bailey on June 20, she was sentenced to death, having had little said in her defence by the defending counsel, who made no attempt to plead provocation, or post-traumatic stress – moves that in current times, would have probably led to a prison sentence, but not death.

Judge Cecil Havers wrote to the Attorney General asking for clemency, but this was refused. Ruth was hanged on July 13, 1955, the 17th woman to be hanged that century, but also the last.

The continuing controversy surrounding her death is due to the fact that the police made no attempt to look into the background of the murder, and that she did not have a fair and detailed trial.

She was alleged to have chased Blakely around his car firing until the gun was empty, but she was very slight and the gun used is very heavy and would have needed a strong man to hold it with both hands.

She was driven to the pub by the man who supplied the gun, possibly to deliberately cause her to commit a crime which would lead to her death. Was it an establishment plot to prevent her from disclosing the names of prominent persons who made use of her services as a call-girl?

After the trial, all the relevant court papers were removed by court order that they should not be released to public view until 50 years had passed, but this order has now been increased by a further 30 years, which adds to the theory that there is something to hide.

To conclude, George posed the question was she a victim or a villain?

The vote of thanks was given by Ken Wade.

Charles Rees

Airline pulls out?

REPORTS have emerged that German airline Germanwings has pulled out of Cardiff Airport, just seven months after establishing its flagship route to Dusseldorf.

It is the only direct route between Wales' national airport and Germany and was launched earlier this year.

Regional AM Andrew RT Davies said: "It is also deeply concerning that Germanwings has cut its losses so quickly, having only established the route to Germany seven months ago."

Happy 100th birthday Lillian!

LAST Friday, November 14, the Deputy Mayor of Barry Town Council, Coun Rob Curtis, paid a visit to the home of Mrs Lillian Reed, to wish her a happy 100th birthday – and to present her with a bouquet of flowers.

During the visit, Lillian proudly showed off her birthday card from the Queen and Coun Curtis wished her many happy returns from the people of Barry for her very special day.

'Outstanding achievement' praised at Barry Primary

BARRY Island Primary School is the first in the Vale to be awarded the coveted 'double excellent' grade – for current performance and future prospects – by education watchdog Estyn.

The Vale AM Jane Hutt and Coun Chris Elmore, cabinet member for schools in the Vale, went to talk to pupils in every classroom and the nursery, as well as meeting the School Council, and congratulated the whole school on their outstanding achievement.

They are pictured (above) with pupils and a staff member.

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MMG defeated by the Airport

MMG scored three goals for the fourth game running but lost out to a well-disciplined Cardiff Airport team.

MMG new transfer signing Simon Colston started up front for his first game with a recall for Declan Govier in defence and Scott Nelson in goal.

MMG had a goal kick which Scott unfortunately kicked into the ground, with Jordan Underdown placing the ball into the empty net.

MMG had enforced changes with their usual centre half pairing of Dave Allen and Paul Edwards both missing.

MMG equalised through Drew Burniston after a great bit of interplay with Simon Colston. Elliot Cayton, Leon Butler, Andrew Mason and Morgan Rogers were working hard in midfield but for most of the first half the Airport had the slight edge.

The game ebbed and flowed through the first half before the Airport scored their second again threw Underdown. This followed almost immediately with Drew hitting his second, a stunning free kick.

The second half started much better from MMG and they were for the most part camped in Airport territory. However, Airport always looked dangerous on the break and took the lead against the run of play with a goal scored by Kristian Powell.

They kept the lead until the 80th minute before new boy Simon Colston followed up a great turn and shot by substitute Mike Evans that Kenny Vaughan could only parry in front of him.

With MMG pushing for the winner they got sucker punched again when a pin point cross was dispatched by Luke Jones.

MMG would like to thank their sponsor BRT International for their continued support and for the Cwm Talwg for laying on the food. **LG**

Hannah is world champ!

CARDIFF and Vale College sport student Hannah Harvey has won a gold and two silver medals at the World Kickboxing Championships.

Hannah (17) from Barry, who has been kickboxing since she was five years old, travelled out to the Italian city of Pisa for the championships, where she won gold in the team category and silver in the points and continuous categories.

"I felt very proud," Hannah said.

"I've been to the World Championships and won gold medals before but this was different, and I won in different categories. This year the championships were bigger and there were more people – it was very exciting!"

Hannah has been kickboxing since she "was tiny."

"When I was five I was bullied, and my dad brought me into kickboxing to do something about it."

She enjoys her Level 3 Sport at CAVC: "It's really good – I'm right up to date with all of my assignments," Hannah said. "Last year I did the Level 2 course and wanted to progress: I want to work in a leisure centre in the future and carry on with my kickboxing job on the side."

Olli a rising star of Rugby League Down Under!

FORMER Bridgend schoolboy, Ollie Olds, was named man of the match when Wales faced Ireland in the European Rugby League championship recently.

In his final year at Llangewydd juniors (aged 11) he represented Bridgend and District against Cardiff and District at the Millennium Stadium in the DC Thomas Cup final, which they won.

He played in the Urdd Sevens tournament at Stradey Park which they won, and in the Rosslyn Park sevens tournament over two days which they also won. (He was awarded man-of-the-match in the final).

While still in the first year, he played at the Millennium Stadium as a curtain raiser to the Challenge Cup between Leeds Rhinos v Hull KR. The team beat Castleford High in the English schools Powergen Cup.

Ollie was later selected to play for Wales under-14s Rugby League side at Sheffield in a round robin tournament.

At Brynteg, he was awarded junior/youth rugby player of the month by Rugby World magazine – the youngest player to have won this at 12 years old.

He started playing Rugby League for Bridgend Blue Bulls and was selected for Wales against England at under-16s level. At 17, he was offered a trial with Leeds Rhinos, was then offered a two-year contract, and was selected for Wales under-18s against England, where he kicked the winning point.

Ollie's first senior cap came against France at Wrexham when he was 18.

Ollie was playing for Leeds under-20s when he became dual registered with York City Knights.

After four games, he was recalled by Leeds but an injury kept him out for six months.

The following season, Leeds agreed that he could play for Scorpions in order to get match fit. During this spell, Leeds sent a DVD of all his games to Brisbane Broncos, who within a week paid his air fare and provided an apartment for him.

He was signed up for a Broncos' feeder club Ipswich Jets, on a two-year contract, and last month was selected to play in the European championships for Wales.

He was capped against Scotland, France and Ireland when he again attraced rave notices.

***GEM note:** The question local (and national) Welsh Rugby Union chiefs should be asking is 'how did we let such a talented young player slip through the net?'*

Under-8s take up the footballing mantle

THE Island Marine under-8s are in their second year of playing football in the Vale, having been together for over two and a half years.

The team are coached by Dave Phillips, Mark Frayne and Gavin Price. All three coaches have achieved their team leader award as well as being fully DSB accredited.

The team train on a Tuesday night, throughout the winter at Holm View Leisure Centre. The side would like to thank their sponsors for this season, Champions Lifting and Safety Limited, who sponsor their playing kit and Sebastian and St James – International Financial Advisors LTD, who sponsor their training kit. **NO**

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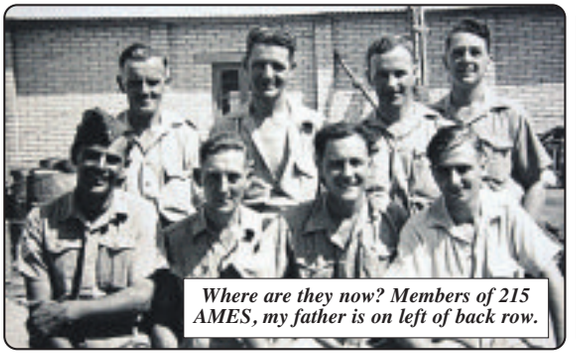
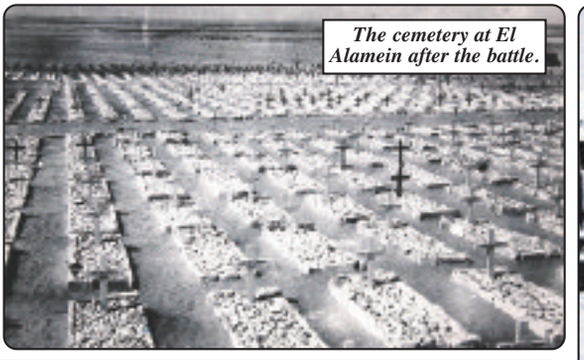


Where are they now? Members of 215 AMES, my father is on left of back row.



The cemetery at El Alamein after the battle.

Monty.

by Keith E Morgan

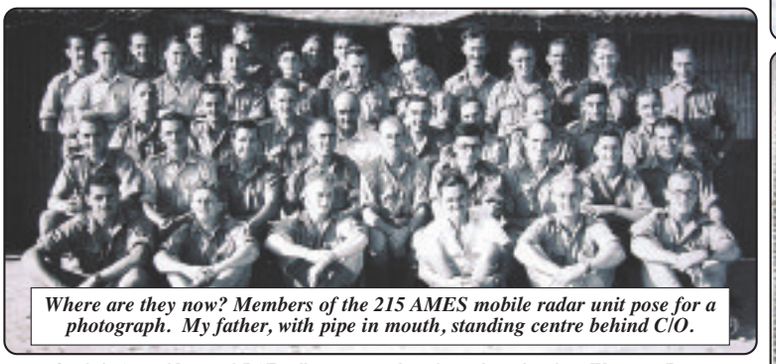
AT 21:40 precisely on the night of October 23, 1942, 882 guns opened up and began a barrage in the Western Desert the size of which had not been witnessed since the First World War.

The sky was ablaze with blinding light and the air filled with thunderous noise and the smell of cordite; the second Battle of El Alamein had begun.

Under the command of Lieutenant-General Bernard Montgomery, the Allies were at last on the offensive, prompting Winston Churchill to pen two of his famous quotations:

'Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.'

'It may almost be said,
"Before Alamein we never had a victory.
After Alamein we never had a defeat."



Where are they now? Members of the 215 AMES mobile radar unit pose for a photograph. My father, with pipe in mouth, standing centre behind C/O.

An 'airgraph' sent back home to family.

LAC Elwyn Morgan with captured German flag. On back in pencil: 'Jerry thought he was going to hang this flag in Cairo, but he has had it!'

Marble Arch (in Tripoli).

I was a six-year-old when my dad was called up to serve in the RAF in 1941. After completing his square bashing, he was posted to North Africa, where he stayed until February 1945 when he returned back to England for discharge at RAF Chipping Norton, in Oxfordshire.

As you can imagine, with my dad in the Western Desert all those years, I was brought up with sand in my teeth. I knew all about Egypt, King Farouk, the Pyramids, the Nile, Jerusalem, Haifa and the Holy Land, the Desert, Tripoli, Benghazi, Tobruk and Sidi Birrani, these were all familiar place names that I grew up with and as a family, we plotted my dad's travels on a world map.

Everyone who had a serving member of the family, had a world map on the wall in those days of long ago.

I am proud to say that my dad, LAC Elwyn Morgan, served in one of those rather elite, but unsung RAF units throughout his stay in North Africa – 215 AMES. The Army had its elite force, the LRDG (the Long Range Desert Group); the RAF had its hush-hush highly secret mobile AMES radar units.

An acronym for Air Ministry Experimental Station, these mobile radar units did not have the glamour or romance which the LRDG commanded, because of the low profile of their top secret nature and the security that automatically went with it. Nevertheless, they had a very important role to play and were up there in the thick of it on the front line with the Army ground forces in both advance and retreat.

Even today, little has been written about the important part these mobile AMES radar units played in helping to win the war in North Africa, and subsequently in Europe and the Far East.

AMES was the name given to the Air Ministry's highly secret RADAR (Radio Detection and Ranging) development team in the immediate pre-World War II era. In Great Britain, the development of a pulsed radar system in 1935 was led by Robert A Watson-Watt resulting in the design and installation of an aircraft detection and tracking system called Chain Home.

By the outbreak of World War II in 1939, sufficient Chain Home stations had been built along the east and south coasts of England to provide vital information that helped the RAF to win the Battle of Britain.

By 1940, the whole coast of the British Isles, including Northern Ireland, was protected by the Chain Home system. Locally, there were Chain Home stations at RAF Stormy Down and on the top of Margam Mountain, where the remains can still be seen from the M4 and visited today.

The speed and efficiency involved in putting the Chain Home, and then overseas stations into action by the early months of the war, was surely one of our best efforts that ultimately helped us to defeat Nazi Germany.

The mobile AMES units were in fact Chain Home stations that could be moved to support ground, air and sea forces. Each mobile AMES unit was equipped with two 100-foot masts respectively serving as transmitter and receiver that could be taken down at a moment's notice and transported to another site on a Queen Mary low loader.

These small, but very close-knit units of 30–40 personnel (officers, boffins, mechanics, drivers, etc) would also have two furniture van-type vehicles with solid sides and rear doors that would house all the electronic equipment necessary for transmitting and receiving signals from the two aerials.

The function of the 'boffins' in these two vehicles would be that of direction finding and reporting of targets for their Army, Navy and RAF colleagues to attend to. The complete mobile unit would be made up with two mobile diesel generators on trailers for power supply, plus the attending support vehicles for towing and carrying the unit's commanding officer, his ground service and operations team together with (in general), tented accommodation.

During the North Africa Campaign, the RAF mobile AMES units worked in close co-ordination with the ground forces. Montgomery believed the battle to be one of attrition where he saw the RAF as giving close air-to-ground support destroying enemy armament, aircraft, forces, ships and supply lines wherever and whenever possible.

He later wrote that this overwhelming air superiority had a huge effect on the battle and not only because of its physical impact, but because:

'The morale effect of air action (on the enemy) is very great and out of all proportion to the material damage inflicted.

'In the reverse direction, the sight and sound of our own air forces operating against the enemy have an equally satisfactory effect on our own troops. A combination of the two has a profound influence on the most important single factor in war – morale.'

The purpose of the mobile AMES units was to be as close to the front line as possible in order to monitor the movement of Axis forces on the ground, in the air and their coastal shipping in the Mediterranean.

This early warning system would then enable the Allies to strike Rommel's ground forces, tanks, airfields, and lines of supply where it would hurt him the most.

My father joined the 215 AMES in Benghazi in 1941, after travelling in a convoy around South Africa and up the Indian Ocean to Egypt. As the Africa Corps advanced towards Egypt, the 215 AMES mobile unit retreated through Sidi Birrani in Libya, Alexandria and Cairo in Egypt to eventually reach Jerusalem in the Holy Land, with a base possibly at Haifa.

When the balloon went up and the barrage started on October 23, 1942, signifying that the second battle of El Alamein was under way, 215 AMES mobile radar unit was quickly on the move forward again in a race to keep up with and provide radar support for the advancing Allied forces.

My dad took the photograph of the cemetery at El Alamein not long after the battle was over. On the back of the photograph he has simply written 'Alamein'. At that time, it looks as if both Allied and Axis dead are buried there together, with a sprinkling of black crosses amongst the white ones.

Between October 23, 1942, and November 4, 1942, Germany and Italy suffered 30,542 casualties (dead or wounded) while Britain and other Commonwealth forces had 13,560 casualties (dead or wounded).

Today, the El Alamein war cemetery contains the graves of men who died at all stages of the Western Desert campaign, brought in from a wide area, but especially those who were killed at the second battle of El Alamein and in the period immediately before that.

There are 7,240 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War in the cemetery, of which 815 are unidentified and 102 are of other nationalities.

It must not be forgotten that the Allied forces were made up of units from the United Kingdom, India, Australia, New Zealand, Union of South Africa, Free French, Greece and Poland.

After El Alamein, Rommel and his Afrika Corps were on the run. The speed with which the Allies were advancing through the Western Desert was phenomenal. They went past Sidi Birrani, Tobruk, Benghazi and on to Marble Arch, the gateway to Tripoli.

The Luftwaffe had a well established landing ground at Marble Arch which they mined and ploughed up before they left on December 15, 1942. By December 18, 1942, the RAF were installed and operating from what was once Mussolini's symbol of his new Roman Empire (unfortunately destroyed by Colonel Kadhafi in 1970). This was the RAF's first entirely airborne move of a complete wing in their quest to keep up with their continuous harassment of the retreating Axis forces.

At 5am on the morning of January 23, 1943, just three months to the day since the 8th Army, the 'Desert Rats' joined battle at El Alamein, the first British and Commonwealth troops entered Tripoli.

At the same time, the advance squadrons of the RAF took over Castel Benito airfield just outside the city with the first officer to fly in being cheeky enough to sign his name in the Italian Visitors' Book in the control tower. Mussolini's Italian Empire was over.

The Army and RAF had advanced a distance of 1,400 miles over desert, carrying every necessity of life and war with them.

Throughout the campaign, the RAF never fell out of range of the front line, endorsing Montgomery's policy and success of close air-to-ground support..

Operation Torch was launched on November 8, 1942, and saw British and American forces land in Algeria. The German and Italian forces were now held in a pincer movement and eventual victory in North Africa was achieved at 7.52am on May 12, 1943 with the surrender of all Axis forces.

Hitler's plan of conquest of North Africa and Egypt, together with his aim to open up a route to the Persian oilfields, was over. The rub is that not only did we rob the Afrika Corps of their thunder, we stole their song 'Lili Marlene' as well – the subject for a story in itself!

Like Balaclava, Waterloo, Trafalgar and many other names, that of El Alamein, an insignificant railway halt on the north coast of Libya, will live on forever in British history.

The 215 AMES mobile radar unit was probably disbanded in January 1944 when the commanding officer Flt Lt Yaudale, returned to the UK.

My father was still in the unit at Benghazi on August 30, 1943, and at Christmas 1943, but by Christmas 1944 he had been transferred to 24 Squadron RAF, probably as a repatriation posting to the UK where he arrived on February 21, 1945.

My dad died at the fairly young age of 55. He never talked much about the war, except perhaps where he had something amusing to recall and he never wanted his medals; I had to claim these once he had died.

When I did my National Service, I was also proud to join the RAF where, guess what? I became an SAC Air Radar Mechanic; like father, like son!

Throughout the time he was in the Middle East, my father always communicated home to my mother, my sister Pauline and myself. Letters were usually in the form of Airgraphs, a system developed to enable the forces to communicate more quickly and reliably with their families back home.

However, like Winston Churchill, my father also put pen (rather pencil) to paper and left me a quotation on the back of a photograph of himself holding a captured German flag, which says:

'Jerry thought he was going to hang this flag in Cairo, but he has had it!'

The colourful aerobics group.

Maendy are to the fore in YFC stockjudging contest!

MAENDY YFC members competed with a strong turnout at the annual Glamorgan YFC Stockjudging day held on October 25, hosted by Wick YFC at Penachdre Farm and Slade Farm.

Maendy members performed extremely well, with results as follows. Under-16: George Thomas – 1st dairy and 3rd pigs; Ellie Howes – 2nd dairy; Evan Thomas – 1st beef; James Anstey – 1st pigs.

Under-21: Lauren Evans – 3rd beef; Beth Jarvis – 1st dairy. Under-26: Heather Jarvis – 2nd pigs, 2nd lambs and 2nd Senior Stockman; Ieuan Rosser – 2nd pigs; and Tom Rees – 3rd lambs, 3rd Dairy, 3rd pigs and 1st Senior Stockman.

The club extends its sincere thanks to the trainers who provided guidance and training in preparation for the competition, and also to the farms who kindly hosted the practices. Successful members will be selected to represent the county at Wales and national levels.

An eighties-inspired aerobic night was held at Pendoylan Primary School on November 11, members from various clubs across the county got into the spirit of the night by dressing in colourful leotards, leggings and even a few wigs to get into character! The dance night was in aid of Help for Heroes and raised a fantastic £120.

The aerobics came in very usual for a six-strong female dance troop who competed in the county commercial dance competition on Friday, November 14. The girls performed to a medley of songs which proved to be a great hit with the audience and also the judge as they achieved first place. The team will now go on to the Wales competition in March.

The aerobics instructors: left to right, Heather Jarvis (chairman), Beth Jarvis (secretary) and Jodie Williams (minutes secretary).

At the Wales YFC Eisteddfod held on Saturday, November 15, club secretary Beth Jarvis achieved first place in the photography competition.

Focus now turns to the preparation for the junior and senior members as they begin practising for a variety of public speaking competitions which will be held on December 7 at the Pencoed campus of Bridgend College and December 14 at Neath Conservative Club respectively.

As always, new members are welcome to come along and find out what Young Farmers Club is all about! For further information visit www.maendy-yfc.com or email maendy.yfc@gmail.com. You can also 'like' the Maendy YFC Facebook page and follow @MaendyYFC on Twitter.

Louise Evans

Liberal Democrat AMs join prostate cancer campaign

Welsh Liberal Democrat AMs Eluned Parrott, Peter Black and William Powell with the Men United scarf and T-shirt.

PETER BLACK, a regional AM for south Wales west, has signed up for Prostate Cancer UK's campaign Men United v Prostate Cancer, which seeks to unite people across the UK against prostate cancer.

Research for the charity shows that nearly 650,000 people in Wales know someone who has been diagnosed with prostate cancer.

The AM said: "Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the UK, affecting many in my region covering Bridgend, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot alone. If we are going to beat this killer we need as many people as possible to sign for Men United.

"It's easy – just search Men United online and you're in! Prostate cancer is a massive opponent but I firmly believe that with the right team we can beat it!"

Emmaus opens new shop

THE new Emmaus store in Caroline Street, Bridgend, was opened by the Mayor of Bridgend, Coun Gary Thomas, on October 31.

Queues at the till were six deep. The store is 'a treasure trove' of homeware, fashion and curios.

Emmaus South Wales' director Tom Clarke said: "This is bringing more retail opportunity for Bridgend shoppers, as well as helping our plans to support homeless people to get back onto their feet. The new shop offers an exciting mix of products including electrical items, clothes and gifts."

Emmaus South Wales won the award for 'Social Enterprise of the Year' for 2014 at the recent Bridgend Business Forum Awards.

Emmaus was founded in 1949. A worldwide movement, it offers an alternative to homelessness by providing people with a home, work and companionship, helping them to learn new skills, regaining their self-esteem and the control of their lives.

CHORUS LINKS UP WITH LOCAL BAND

The Broadway Kids.

THE Broadway Chorus is presenting its sixth annual autumn show at the Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl on Saturday November 29, when the award-winning Tredegar Town Band makes a special appearance.

The band recently performed part of the musical score for the critically acclaimed film *Pride* and next year it joins the Rambert Ballet Company at Sadlers Wells in London for a week-long production.

Members of the Sarah Burnell School of Dance, Broadway Chorus and the Broadway Kids are also on stage in an evening of quality, live music for all the family. The show on November 29 starts 7.30pm.

'Every Link Counts' visit impresses Ogmore's AM

JANICE GREGORY, the AM for Ogmore, visited innovative social enterprise Every Link Counts (ELC) on November 14 to learn how it is benefiting the local area.

She visited ELC in Maesteg, where she talked to staff and participants about the refurbishment of its Digilink learning centre, which received funding from the South-East Wales Community Economic Development (SEWCED) programme.

ELC was founded as a charity in 1992 to help young people between the ages of 14 to 30 take part in mainstream activities. The centre now offers a professional stationery printing service, the transfer of VHS tapes to DVD, film-making and media, computer and life skills training for clients, as well as Learn Direct qualifications.

The visit was organised by the Wales Co-operative Centre to promote social enterprise and co-operatives as part of Global Entrepreneurship Week.

The Wales Co-operative Centre supports social enterprises and co-operatives and is mainly funded by Welsh Government and the European Regional Development Fund.

The centre's support enables customers to access mainstream social and leisure activities in their own communities and to take part in various projects aimed at enhancing their life skills.

The AM said: "ELC is a great example of how social enterprise can develop and grow; their determination and creative thinking has produced viable trade opportunities to assist in subsidising its charitable activities.

"Social enterprises are strengthening the economy, helping tackle poverty and making Wales a better place to live. ELC is a great example of a social enterprise which is giving back to its local community as well as making a difference."

WI's cheque presentation to Motor Neurone group

COYCHURCH WI's November meeting began with the president Sandra Davidson welcoming members and in particular Mrs Lesley Frost, representing The Motor Neurone Society.

Mrs Frost was presented with a cheque for £400 by Coychurch Ladies.

Mrs Frost gratefully received the donation and gave a short talk on how the donations are used by the charity.

The business of the evening included feedback on the recent skittles event, which was enjoyed by all, the winner being Elaine Edmunds.

Members were reminded of the coffee morning scheduled for November 5; the December meeting will be held on the afternoon of Wednesday December 3 at 1.30pm with the main business followed by a chicken/fish and chip lunch, with special live entertainment and a parcel wrapping demonstration.

The meeting on Wednesday, January 7 at 1.30pm will be followed by kurling and nibbles.

Ladies were encouraged to get snapping photographs for the 2016 GFWI calendar. The theme is 'your favourite beauty spot in the Glamorgan Federation'.

The Radio Cymru Christmas cake competition is being promoted through Shan Cothi's Radio Show, and members who wish to enter need to send a slice of their cake to the show for judging by December 19.

The winner will receive a prize of a master class in their own home with Beca Lyne-Perkis.

PACT meetings

BRYNTIRION, LALESTON, and MERTHYR MAWR PACT is at Bryntirion and Laleston Community Centre, Mount Pleasant, Bryntirion, November, 26 at 6.30pm.

OLDCASTLE PACT in the library, Brynteg Comprehensive School on November, 26 at 6.30pm.

MORFA TOWN PACT at Penybont Primary School, Minerva Street on December 1, at 6.30pm.

BRACKLA PACT at Brackla Deaf Club, Coychurch Road, Bridgend on December 2 at 7pm.

CEFN GLAS, LLANGEWYDD and BRYNHYFRYD PACT at Westward Community Centre, on January 5 at 6.30pm.

NEWCASTLE PACT at Westward Community Centre, on January 5 at 6.30pm.

MORFA WILDMILL PACT at The Community Life Centre, The Precinct, Wildmill on January 8 at 6.30pm.

LITCHARD, PENDRE and COITY PACT at Litchard Mission, Litchard on January 15 at 7pm.

First National Premiership victory for the Pencoed Phoenix team!

Nerys Lloyd (with the ball) was chosen as player of the match. PICTURES BY JULIE HANCOCK.

THERE was a certain optimism within the Phoenix ranks that they could overturn their narrow 24-22 September defeat in the Dulais Valley against Seven Sisters Ladies.

During the course of this match that optimism was realized in no uncertain terms, with this comprehensive seven try victory giving the joyous Phoenix players their first National Premiership win.

Scrambled defence saved Phoenix in the opening minutes, dangerous visitors' outside half Rachel Rees almost breaking clear. It was Phoenix who opened the scoring however, a visitors move breaking down in the home half for second row Charlotte Mundy to hack clear before regathering and an inside pass saw Kathryn Criger racing in under the posts from 35 metres, Sam Trickey adding the extras.

A threatening run from centre Leanne Burnell put Phoenix into the visitors' half and following a solid scrum platform the ball was moved wide to Burnell who needed no second invitation, stepping in from the crossfield cover before racing in from 40 metres for a 12-0 home lead.

Phoenix were now beginning to play with confidence, moving the ball wide from recycled possession before Nerys Lloyd caught the visitors' defence flat with a well judged kick ahead to regather and cross under the posts, Trickey converting to take Phoenix into a 19-0 lead and unknown territory against their far more experienced visitors at this level.

Approaching the interval with Phoenix deep in their own 22, and with home support conscious of the need to protect their lead, suddenly the ball broke to Burnell who put on the after burners to scorch away from 80 metres leaving the desperate visitors cover for dead. Trickey converted and Phoenix led 26-0 at halftime.

Phoenix increased their lead in the opening minutes of the second period, moving the ball wide again to Burnell who kicked ahead into the visitors half for the chasing Amy Stevens to gather the high bouncing ball on the run to crash over, Trickey converting to leave the visitors' with a mountain to climb.

To their credit Seven Sisters came back strongly, their big pack led by Welsh international Bethan Howells pounding the home line, and desperate last ditch tackles from Hannah Brunskill and Mundy keeping them out, before No8 Stevens relieved pressure with a fine clearance from near her own line.

Leanne Burnell crosses for the Phoenix.

The visitors returned to the home line and despite courageous Phoenix defence Joanna Owen crashed over for a deserved visitors score. Any thoughts of a match turnaround were soon dispelled with Phoenix full back Hannah Whittingham taking centre stage with two tries; put in possession in broken play on both occasions, the slightly-built Whittingham shrugged of a number of would-be tacklers before racing away from 40 and 60 metres respectively to score, Trickey adding both conversions.

Sandwiched between home tries and following try saving tackles from Lisa Hughes and Mundy, Howells had crashed over for a visitors try converted by Rees, but Phoenix on this occasion were not to be denied and ran out emphatic 47-12 winners.

Nerys Lloyd was chosen Phoenix player of the match by her opponents with Hannah Whittingham the choice of her Phoenix teammates. Bethan Howells was chosen by Phoenix as the Seven Sisters' player of the match.

Phoenix executed their game plan well during this match, moving their bigger opponents around the park and releasing their own quick players to devastating effect.

The Phoenix camp can take confidence from arguably their best performance since their 2010 inception, and on Sunday travel to league leaders Skewen, formerly Neath Athletic, in the National Premiership, 2.30 pm kick off. **TR**

The Ath to face off against Kenfig Hill

BRIDGEND ATHLETIC 1st XV have arranged a friendly fixture with Kenfig Hill at South Wales Police Ground on Thursday, November 20, kick off 7.15pm.

Kenfig Hill currently top Division 1 West Central league and could join the Athletic in the Championship next season.

To add spice to the occasion they are coached by former Athletic head coach and director of rugby Paul Yardley, who was also in the coaching set up that led the Athletic through the leagues to the Championship. The match is likely to be very competitive. **AB**

PORTHCAWL RUGBY ROUND-UP

IN a game dictated by the weather, Porthcawl RFC youth managed to come out convincing winners, 19-15, in a hard physical game against Pontyclun youth.

Credit must go to both teams for attempting to move the ball as much as possible. The first quarter was a cut and thrust affair, with both sides defending or attacking well.

The stalemate was broken by Pontyclun who scored an unconverted try wide out. The young Seaweeds rallied in response to this and after several drives on the away line Will Robinson drove over between the posts for a try, converted by J Williams.

Although both teams tried hard there was no further score with the half finishing 7-5 to Porthcawl.

With wholesale changes from the home bench at halftime, Porthcawl renewed their attack on the Pontyclun line. Their endeavour was soon rewarded by a Chris Long try to take the score to 12-5.

With the rain increasing, both sides attempted to play as best they could but the conditions dictated.

However, Pontyclun still managed to score two further tries while a try by Ollie Banner, converted by Jim Needs, was enough to secure a winning margin for Porthcawl.

With the emphasis on development, under-16 players Joe Williams and Euan Manly stood up well in a difficult match and gained invaluable experience. **CW**

UNDER-9S - LLANTWIT MAJOR 13, PRFC 12

Porthcawl were away on a cold dry morning in Llantwit Major against a side we have only played once in tag.

In the first half we started slowly again, conceding three tries and only scoring one in return early on. The team did pull together as the game progressed and the second half was a very good performance, the third set of 10 minutes an excellent performance.

The team are really are starting to play for each other which is reaping the rewards it deserves. Josh did well playing at scrum half and did an excellent job controlling the breakdown. He didn't get his name on the scoresheet, but made the passes for most of them.

Jac Bevan, Max Williams, and Sam tackled their hearts out; Llantwit were regularly pinned back when they were hunted down by these three. Dylan, Matthew, Rory, Rowan, Max Shirley, Harrison, Jack Childs, and Max Thomas all looked good going forward with ball in hand.

The progression of this team week on week is very good to see. The team performance was excellent, well done to you all.

Try scorers: Max Williams (5), Dylan Bell (3), Jac Bevan (2), Rory, Harrison. **JP**

UNDER-8S - PORTHCAWL 9, LLANTWIT MAJOR 5

Llantwit Major did not know what hit them in the first five minutes of this game.

In the first game our defence was on fire - we have been working on moving up quickly and closing down the space, this will be essential next year when we start tackling.

We shot up in a line and tagged out the opposition on a number of occasions, not allowing Llantwit to get their running game going and more or less kept our defensive line after multiple phases.

This then allowed us to have lots of ball by turning over the ball and enabled us to show off our running game.

We saw in spades what we have been working on in training, and in the first game blew away the opposition by moving the ball away from the defenders and running the angles like professionals.

From Piers' try to Ryan taking the ball in space rather than hovering behind the passer, standing out wider and taking the ball at pace allowing him to score a great long range try, to Rose finishing off a great move - it was all very pleasing to watch.

Top try contributor went to Oscar not just for his angled runs coming at pace, but for the supporting runs and try scoring passes he made. Lewis was given the individual clubman award.

All of the team put in a shift defensively with Piers and Dexter to Lex, Lewis, Ryan, Oscar and Theo - but top tagger went to Dylan, where in the first game he charged up continuously and took on the mantle of defensive champion.

We finished the first game 7-3 up, in the second game we had eight individuals on the field, and rather continue to play as a team we tried too hard individually, the score ending 2-2.

Awards - clubman best effort, Lewis; clubman making a difference - Lex and Theo; tagger - Dylan, followed by Lewis (11), Ryan (8), Theo (7), Dylan (6); top try contributor - Oscar.

Try scorers - Theo (3), Piers, Lex, Ryan, Lewis, Oscar, Rose. **RH**

In the under-12s, Porthcawl emerged 17-0 winners against Llantwit Major. **TW**

The Sports under-15s give a good account...

NEATH Athletic provided an interesting test for Bridgend Sports' under-15s as it was intriguing to see how we compete against a side that is well placed in the top tier of the Ospreys Cup; the Sports once again had a good turn out with a squad of 23.

The Sports have scored the first try in each of their last six matches and this good trend continued thanks to prop Dewi Ronan who showed good strength and determination to force himself over the try line from close range. Scrum half Will Prosser then successfully converted from the right hand side of the pitch to give the Sports an early 7-0 lead.

However, unfortunately for the Sports, this lead did not last for too long as the visitors cranked up the pressure deep inside the Sports half which forced the home side to concede several penalties in close proximity of each other.

These penalties did not help the Sports as Neath Athletic levelled the match as a result of scoring a converted try to the left of the posts, but the Sports soon edged back in front through a great individual try by outside half Drew Price.

Drew started his skilful run from just outside the visitors' 22 and ended it by scoring in the right hand corner of the pitch to give the Sports a 12-7 lead, though, once again, this lead was shortlived as Neath Athletic took the lead for the first time, off the back of a penalty which set up one of their players to score a converted try.

With halftime looming, it was crucial for the Sports not to concede again before the break, but perhaps the compelling moment in terms of the result came when Neath Athletic did just that as they eased past the Sports' defence to score under the posts. Consequently, the halftime score was 21-12 to Neath Athletic.

With the Sports suffering from that late first half blow it was now imperative for them to score the first try of the second half, but this did not go to plan as the visitors extended their lead to 14 points when their centre spotted a gap in the Sports defence to score a decisive try.

The Sports did not give up and narrowed the deficit to just seven points when forward Gethin Isaac made a dangerous break to then make a good offload to captain Matthew Biggs, who continued his rich vein of scoring. Drew Price then converted to make the score 26-19.

For the rest of the game the Sports' defence was put to the test and, in particular, full back Izak Thomas should be commended for making several try-saving tackles throughout the match. The game ended with Neath Athletic taking the spoils with a 26-19 victory.

Overall, the Sports should be satisfied with their performance as it saw them compete with one of the better sides in the Ospreys region. As always, the Sports gave their all and hopefully they can get back to winning ways. **TP**

... while under-8s impress

SUNDAY, November 16, saw Bridgend Sports RFC under-8s continued their winning run by defeating both Bridgend Athletic and Tonyrefail at Newbridge Fields.

In a quite frenetic local derby Bridgend Athletic took the lead before Sam Gardner levelled the scores after a fine passage of play. Both sets of defence were on top form and the scoreline remained 1-1 up until the break.

In the second half, Bridgend Sports started to take control of the game, as their defence started to frustrate the Athletic.

Gaps started to open when the Sports attacked. Owen Hanney and George Jones, with two tries, made it 4-1 before Athletic started to play a more direct game trying to punch holes through the Sports defence. The Athletic managed to score and narrowed the deficit to two.

Sports were not to be denied the local bragging rights though and countered with some great flowing rugby and support play, scoring two more tries through Jack Sperduty, with the Athletic replying with a score in between, the final score 6-3.

In the second game of the morning a young Tonyrefail team played really well against the Sports, but it was the home side who prevailed by three tries in the end.

Once again, the Sports started slowly and Tonyrefail took the lead with the first play of the game.

Sports hit back with three tries before halftime with James Murray scoring his first two tries in a blue and white shirt followed by Tom Collier.

Tonyrefail replied just before halftime to make it 3-2 to the Sports. In the second half, Bridgend Sports extended their lead with tries from Gruff Roberts and a second for Tom Collier before Tonyrefail scored their third and final try.

It was Sports though who had the last say as Ethan Walters finished the scoring, the final score 6-3 again! Once again, a strong showing from the Bridgend Sports under-8s, with their defensive lines causing teams major problems and when the opportunity presented itself, the young side attacked as a team.

There was a big turn out on the day with great support. The club would like to extend thanks to the parents, with special thanks and congratulations extended to the squad of young players.

Well done to Sam Gardner, Daniel Harris, Jack Sperduty, Owen Hanney, Ethan Walters, Thomas Bimson, Luc Tabram, Sam King, Hannah McNally, James Murray, Gruff Roberts, Dylan Harrison, George Jones, Steffan Pritchard, Tom Collier, Isabella Ripano, Ben Evans, Dylan Griffiths. **SP**

Bridge results

THE results for Bridgend Bridge Club for recent events are:

Wednesday, November 12, Children in Need night - First, Tony Ratcliff and Julian Pottage; Second, Peter Bugden and Geoff Barnes; Third, John Beard and Liam Sheridan. Winners on handicap Tony Ratcliff and Julian Pottage.

Friday, November 14 - First, Jenny Vaughan and Irene Thomas; Second Norma and David Newman; Third Emer and Tony Disley. Winners on handicap Jenny Vaughan and Irene Thomas.

Regular club nights take place on Wednesdays and Fridays at Nolton Church Hall at 7pm. We try to start at 7pm so it helps if people arrive at least 10 minutes early.

On Thursdays from 2pm to 5pm, also at Nolton Church Hall, there are gentle bridge sessions for the less experienced bridge players where assistance is readily available.

The best placed improvers for November 13 were Colin Lewis, Stuart Davies, Arthur Harvey, V Irene Thomas and Michael Williams.

There are lessons on Thursdays at 11am, also at Nolton Church Hall - these are primarily for beginners and those who have played some bridge and would like to improve either or both their bidding and card play.

It is still possible to book a place on the course - for further information contact John Evans on 01656 880372; there will be no sessions on November 20 and 27. **DN**

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Family Notices

WILLIAMS
Malcolm

Peacefully passed away at home on 8th November. Malcolm of Colcot Road, Barry was the most beloved husband to his soul mate Evelyn and was the best father, grandfather and great grandfather anyone could wish for.

Your legacy will live on through us. We love you and miss you so much xxx

Funeral on Friday 21st November at Adams of Barry at 10.30am followed by burial at the cemetery and wake at West End Labour Club.

Family flowers only. Any donations will be given to Marie Curie to thank them for their support.

FELLOWS
Rosemary Joan

Peacefully, on November 12 at her home in Llantwit Major, after a short illness bravely fought, Rosemary, beloved wife of John, dearly loved Mum of Paul, Sharon and Sarah, dear mother-in-law of Jeanette, John and Mark, devoted Nannie of Sam.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W James & Sons, Fonmon. Funeral Wednesday November 26, Service and cremation 3.00pm at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry.

Flowers may be sent to the Funeral Home.

HUGHES
Thomas Joseph

Passed away peacefully on 7th November, beloved husband of the late Councillor Lorna Hughes.

Private Requiem Mass to be held at Our Lady and St Illtyd RC Church, Ham Lane, Llantwit Major on Tuesday 25th November at 1pm followed by interment at Boverton Cemetery.

Fortified by rites of Holy Mother Church

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Funeral arrangements entrusted to The Vale Funeral Service, Barry 01446 407962.

GARSTANG
William John

Peacefully, on November 5 after a long illness, Bill of Llantwit Major, beloved husband of the late Mary.

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EVANS
Gaynor Mary *née Stevens*

Peacefully, on November 9 at Llandough Hospital, Gaynor of Rhoose, beloved wife of Neil, dearly loved mother of Amy and Gareth, loving daughter of Jack and Mair Stevens, much loved sister of Silvia and her family.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W James & Sons, Fonmon. Funeral Tuesday November 25, service 1.00pm at St Peters Church, Rhoose followed by cremation at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry at 2.15pm. No flowers by request, donations in lieu, if desired, to Marie Curie Cancer Care c/o J James, 11 Fonmon Road, Rhoose, Vale of Glamorgan CF62 3DZ.

HOPKINS
Dilys May *née* Jones

Sadly Dilys, of St Athan, aged 84 years, passed away on November 11 at Milsom House Care Home, St Athan. Beloved wife of the late Glyndwr, loved sister of Marian and Des, Aunty of Mark and Richard, sadly missed by all her family, reunited at last with Glyn.

Resting at the Private Funeral Home of W. James & Sons, Fonmon. Funeral Thursday November 27, service 2.00pm at St Athan Church, followed by interment in St Athan Cemetery.

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VALE of GLAMORGAN
BRO MORGANNWG

RHYBUDD O GADARNHAU GORCHYMYN LLWYBR CYHOEDDUS DEDDF PRIFFYRDD 1980 CYNGOR BRO MORGANNWG (LLWYBR TROED CYHOEDDUS RHIF 12 MARCROES) GORCHYMYN AILGYFEIRIO LLWYBR CYHOEDDUS 2014

Ar 23 Hydref 2014, cadarnhaodd Cyngor Bro Morgannwg y Gorchymyn uchod a wnaethpwyd o dan adran 119 Deddf Priffyrdd.

Effaith y Gorchymyn a gadarnhawyd, fydd ailgyfeirio rhan o lwybr troed cyhoeddus fel y'i heglurwyd yn yr Atodlen ac a welir ar fap y Gorchymyn.

Bydd copïau o'r Gorchymyn a gadarnhawyd a map y Gorchymyn, i'w gweld yn rhad ac am ddim yn ystod yr wythnos yn y cyfeiriad isod, rhwng 9:00am a 4:00pm o 20 Tachwedd 2014 hyd 5 Ionawr 2015. Bydd copïau o'r map a'r Gorchymyn ar werth yn y fan honno am £4.50 yr un.

Daw'r Gorchymyn hwn i rym ar 20 Tachwedd 2014. Serch hynny, os bydd unrhyw un sy'n tybio iddo gael cam o'i herwydd yn dymuno holi ynghylch dilysrwydd y Gorchymyn, neu unrhyw ddarpariaeth ynddo, am y tyb nad yw o fewn pwerau'r Ddeddf uchod, ynteu na chydymffurfiwyd â'i gofynion neu'r rheoliadau a wnaed o dani wrth gadarnhau'r Gorchymyn, bydd hawl i'r unigolyn hwnnw wneud cais i'r Uchel Lys o dan baragraff 2 Atodiad 2 o'r Ddeddf drwy weithrediad paragraff 5 Atodlen 6, cyn pen 6 wythnos ar ôl 20 Tachwedd 2014.

Dyddiedig 20 Tachwedd 2014

Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Datblygu, Swyddfeydd y Dociau, Heol yr Isffordd, CF63 4RT

NOTICE OF CONFIRMATION OF PUBLIC PATH ORDER HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL (PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO 12 MARCROSS) PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION ORDER 2014

On the 23rd day of October 2014 The Vale of Glamorgan Council confirmed the above Order made under Section 119 of the Highways Act.

The effect of the Order as confirmed is to divert part of the public footpath as set out in the Schedule and shown in the Order map.

A copy of the confirmed Order and Order map may be seen at the address below free of charge between 9:00am and 4:00pm on weekdays from 20th November 2014 until 5th January 2015. Copies of the Order and map may be bought here at a price of £4.50.

This Order comes into force on the 20th November 2014, but if any person aggrieved by the Order desires to question its validity or that of any provision contained in it, on the ground that it is not within the powers of the above Act, as amended, or on the ground that any requirement of that Act, as amended, or any regulation made under it has not been complied with in relation to the confirmation of the Order, he/she may, under paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Act as applied by paragraph 5 of Schedule 6 to the Act, within 6 weeks from 20th November 2014 make an application to the High Court.

Dated this 20th November 2014

Director of Development Services, Docks Offices, Subway Road, Barry, CF63 4RT

VALE of GLAMORGAN
BRO MORGANNWG

RHYBUDD O GADARNHAU GORCHYMYN LLWYBR CYHOEDDUS DEDDF PRIFFYRDD 1980 CYNGOR BRO MORGANNWG (LLWYBR TROED CYHOEDDUS RHIF 12 LLANDDUNWYD) GORCHYMYN AILGYFEIRIO LLWYBR CYHOEDDUS 2014

Ar 23 Hydref 2014, cadarnhaodd Cyngor Bro Morgannwg y Gorchymyn uchod a wnaethpwyd o dan adran 119 Deddf Priffyrdd.

Effaith y Gorchymyn a gadarnhawyd, fydd ailgyfeirio rhan o lwybr troed cyhoeddus fel y'i heglurwyd yn yr Atodlen ac a welir ar fap y Gorchymyn.

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Daw'r Gorchymyn hwn i rym ar 20 Tachwedd 2014. Serch hynny, os bydd unrhyw un sy'n tybio iddo gael cam o'i herwydd yn dymuno holi ynghylch dilysrwydd y Gorchymyn, neu unrhyw ddarpariaeth ynddo, am y tyb nad yw o fewn pwerau'r Ddeddf uchod, ynteu na chydymffurfiwyd â'i gofynion neu'r rheoliadau a wnaed o dani wrth gadarnhau'r Gorchymyn, bydd hawl i'r unigolyn hwnnw wneud cais i'r Uchel Lys o dan baragraff 2 Atodiad 2 o'r Ddeddf drwy weithrediad paragraff 5 Atodlen 6, cyn pen 6 wythnos ar ôl 20 Tachwedd 2014.

Dyddiedig 20 Tachwedd 2014

Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Datblygu, Swyddfeydd y Dociau, Heol yr Isffordd, CF63 4RT

NOTICE OF CONFIRMATION OF PUBLIC PATH ORDER HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL (PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO 12 WELSH ST DONATS) PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION ORDER 2014

On the 23rd day of October 2014 The Vale of Glamorgan Council confirmed the above Order made under Section 119 of the Highways Act.

The effect of the Order as confirmed is to divert part of the public footpath as set out in the Schedule and shown in the Order map.

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Dated this 20th November 2014

Director of Development Services, Docks Offices, Subway Road, Barry, CF63 4RT

VALE of GLAMORGAN
BRO MORGANNWG

RHYBUDD O GADARNHAU GORCHYMYN LLWYBR CYHOEDDUS DEDDF PRIFFYRDD 1980 CYNGOR BRO MORGANNWG (LLWYBR TROED CYHOEDDUS RHIF 17 LLANILID) GORCHYMYN AILGYFEIRIO LLWYBR CYHOEDDUS 2014

Ar 23 Hydref 2014, cadarnhaodd Cyngor Bro Morgannwg y Gorchymyn uchod a wnaethpwyd o dan adran 119 Deddf Priffyrdd.

Effaith y Gorchymyn a gadarnhawyd, fydd ailgyfeirio rhan o lwybr troed cyhoeddus fel y'i heglurwyd yn yr Atodlen ac a welir ar fap y Gorchymyn.

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Dyddiedig 20 Tachwedd 2014

Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Datblygu, Swyddfeydd y Dociau, Heol yr Isffordd, CF63 4RT

NOTICE OF CONFIRMATION OF PUBLIC PATH ORDER HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL (PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO 17 LLANILID) PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION ORDER 2014

On the 23rd day of October 2014 The Vale of Glamorgan Council confirmed the above Order made under Section 119 of the Highways Act.

The effect of the Order as confirmed is to divert part of the public footpath as set out in the Schedule and shown in the Order map.

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Dated this 20th November 2014

Director of Development Services, Docks Offices, Subway Road, Barry, CF63 4RT

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Bad results for hockey teams

PENARTH Hockey Club faced another couple of tricky Davis Wood Hockey League encounters at the weekend, hampered by the absence of key players.

Penarth's First XI travelled across the Severn Bridge for a late afternoon fixture against mid-table rivals Bristol University 'B' knowing that a victory was essential to remain in touch with a top two threatening to pull away from the rest of the division.

Despite the journey to darkest Shirehampton, it was the visitors who started the more brightly, building through Chris Baker and Tom Haran in midfield and putting immediate pressure on the student defence.

The early effort was rewarded when a pacy approach was finished off by the lurking Chris McCarthy with less than 10 minutes on the clock, buoying a Penarth side that, despite the odd Bristol foray, had yet to defend its own goal.

The Vale side doubled its advantage midway through the half, when Baker produced a typical piece of individual hockey before firing past the hapless University goalkeeper, and the strike was made more welcome by the knowledge that the students were gradually coming more into the game, with increasing pressure being applied to the visitors' goal.

With right-half Dave Stevens and goalkeeper Mark Harris in fine form, the sides went into the interval without any further addition to the score, but Penarth knew that they would need to be on their mettle to prevent their hard-earned advantage being unravelled by their hosts.

Unfortunately, a change of strategy allowed the students to seize the upper-hand straight after the interval, and concerted pressure on the Penarth goal drew a couple of sharp saves from Harris.

The 'keeper could not keep the Bristol forwards at bay forever though and, eventually, the Penarth defences were breached by a penalty corner.

Rocked by the goal, Penarth were quickly brought back to parity as further University pressure led to a cross from the left that found a forward unmarked just a few feet off the goal-line. With only the recovering Harris to beat, a goal was inevitable, and drawing level only served to give the students fresh impetus.

Although Penarth enjoyed their share of attacking moments, they appeared less incisive than their hosts, and it was only a matter of time before the advantage finally tipped in Bristol's fashion.

Once again, Penarth were undone by a sustained run of penalty corners, with one eventually sneaking in at the right-hand post to make the score 3-2 in Bristol's favour.

Undeterred, and keen to secure the result that their endeavour deserved, Penarth continued to look for ways through the student defence, but it appeared as if fate may have turned against them. However, a brief injury break while Harris shook off the effects of a goalmouth collision appeared to give Penarth the chance to collect their thoughts, and renewed pressure eventually led to a hard-earned equaliser as Gareth Hurman popped up at the far post to tap home a ball fired in from the left flank.

With very little time remaining after the restart, Penarth were able to hold on and claim a merited 3-3 draw that secures them in fourth place in De Cymru & The Marches 1.

CAREW 5-2 PENARTH 'A'

With a depleted side, and midfield Paul Thomas deputising between the sticks in the absence of a recognised goalkeeper, Penarth's 2nd XI was always going to be up against on their trip to Swansea.

Despite another spirited display to match the one apparent in the previous week's reverse against co-leaders Cardiff & Met 'F, Penarth had no answer for the pressure applied by their hosts and eventually succumbed to a 5-2 defeat that drags them closer to the bottom four.

League games continue this weekend (Saturday, November 22), with the 1st XI hosting Wotton-under-Edge at Barry Sports Centre, while the seconds head across Cardiff to take on one of the myriad Whitchurch teams populating the De Cymru 2 division.

Penarth Hockey Club always welcomes new, old and returning players, umpires, supporters, friends and helpers regardless of age and ability. Training takes place on the artificial turf at Barry Sport Centre every Wednesday, with the juniors in action between 6-7pm and seniors between 7-8pm.

Further information can be obtained from club secretary Dave Stevens via: d_stevens81@hotmail.co.uk.

CL

Cottrell ladies celebrate the end of the season

The Cottrell Park ladies enjoyed a pleasant evening at their end of season dinner.

Following a good meal the team captains reported on their teams' performance throughout the year. Sian Lovell reported that both the first and second teams held their own in their divisions. The first team remain in Division 2 and the second in Division 8 west.

She then told the story of their performances in clever verse. Helen Evans, the friendly captain, also reported in verse how much everyone had enjoyed playing in the teams; they both thanked all the ladies who had played in the teams, thanking them for their support.

Cathy Northam was presented with the second team cup for her tremendous support during the year.

CB

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When a local horse won the Welsh Grand National...

WALES' most prestigious horse race, The Coral Welsh Grand National, will be held at Chepstow Racecourse on December 27.

Little did I think when I saw Evan Williams's late father, Llancarfan farmer Rhys Williams, win the the adjacent hunts' race at the Tredegar Farmers' Hunt Point-To-Point Steeplechases at Lower Machen, a delightful liitle racecourse which was being used for the first time back in 1964, on a horse called Norther that I was witnessing the following year's winner of Wales' showpiece race - and, as it happens, no other horse actually trained in Wales has been successful since.

In my book, The Welsh Grand National - From Deerstalker to Supreme Glory , I tell how this famous win came about.

One horse who made a big impression in Welsh point-to-points during the 1964 season was Glanville Jones' Norther who had been qualified with the Pentych Hunt. On two occasions Norther, who loved munching those mints with a hole in the middle, had beaten Snowdra Queen the mare bought out of Wales by Mrs Jackie Brutton and who was to win, among other races, the United Hunts Challenge Cup at Cheltenham.

Led over the last by Quintina, who was trying to land a notable double for trainer Fred Winter who had saddled Jay Trump to win the Aintree National, Norther stayed on gallantly to beat Fred Winter's charge by a length with Dark Venetian pipping Limonali for third place.

Norther was Terry Biddlecombe's 99th winner of the season; Norther, who was landing his fifth win of the season, was trained by Denzil Jenkins of Cowbridge in the Vale.

During the Second World War,Sqdn Ldr Jenkins ,DFC, had commanded a squadron of fighter pilots and had 192 flying operations to his credit. He declared: "He was well bred enough to win anything being by Precipitation and Terry was very confident today."

Mr Jones though was surprised as he thought the horse had been given too much weight. Norther was to have been ridden by Ken White but he had been claimed to ride Pallas Main which finished fifth.

Sadly, the Grand National third, Mr Jones, had a fatal fall at the water jump and his rider Chris Collins was not only badly shaken but had a nasty leg gash. Terry Biddlecombe's brother, Tony, also had good reason to remember this particular Chepstow meeting. He rode a hat-trick!

The following year, Norther finished seventh in the Aintree National and was second in the Scottish National. A fine jumper he was to return to point-to-pointing and had only one fall since 1966 when at the age of 15 he came down at the first fence at the South Pembrokeshire. He sadly somehow broke his jaw when grazing in his field and had to be put down.

Another Welsh point-to-pointer to win the Welsh Grand National was Gordon Llewellin's Dudley Cup winner Clover Bud which was successful in 1960 when ridden by David Nicholson.

As tough as old boots, Clover Bud initiated her stud career with two sets of dead twins, but was to prove most successful at stud in later years. Clover Bud died at the ripe old age of 27 and produced Captain Clover and champion point-to-pointer National Clover who was the dam of that good Cheltenham horse Go Ballistic. Another horse trained in the Vale to win the Welsh Grand National was Posy Lewis' Limonali, who was successful in 1959 and 1961 - more about this little horse later.

You can e-mail your news or views to brianlee4@virginmedia.com or phone him on 02920736438.

BRIAN LEE

The Omen is a winner

***THE Omen*, trained by Tim Vaughan at Aberthin, landed the British Legion Peace In Our Time Handicap Chase at Lingfield recently.**

Confidently ridden by 7lb claiming jockey Alan Johns, eight-year-old *The Omen*,who was made the 5-4 favourite, romped home 12 lengths ahead of *Gizzit*.

BRIAN LEE

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Cowbridge under-14s make Cup progress

COWBRIDGE under-14s successfully got through to the second round of the Blues Cup with a comfortable away victory at Gwernyfed.

The game's first try came from a text book turnover by the Cowbridge open-side flanker, Ben Jones. Ioan Williams quickly fed Reuben Williams on the crash ball, for R.Williams to crash over wide out on the right wing.

Straight from the resulting kick off, Cowbridge showed their intent with a superb backs move resulting in the play moving deep inside the Gwernyfed half. Gwernyfed stole the ball, but a brilliant turnover by Evan Lloyd gave Cowbridge the ball back.

Cowbridge showed great composure and produced 10 phases of play to set up a great team try for Iwan Price-Thomas on the far left wing. Evan Thomas converted.

Gwernyfed came back at Cowbridge and took a couple of scrums against the head, allowing their dangerous inside centre to get his hands on the ball making good yards into the Cowbridge half. Cowbridge's third try of the first half came from Andy Davies winning a scrum against the head.

With the surprise possession, Reuben Williams picked up and ran from his own 22 to just inside the Gwernyfed 22. Ioan Williams fed Evan Thomas, who with great soft hands offloaded to Ben Jones who put Jack Dixon in for his first try of the game on the right wing.

Gwernyfed were defending well and keeping the Cowbridge backs at bay. Gwernyfed managed to clear their lines after a concerted 10 minutes deep inside their own 22.

From this clearing kick, Evan Thomas took a great catch and set his right winger, Dixon, off on a great run. He was brought down with just 10 metres to the Gwernyfed line. With great support from the forwards the ball came back very quickly for I.Williams to feed Jack Little, the powerful second row, to go over for Cowbridge's fourth try of the half. E.Thomas converted to make it Gwernyfed 0, Cowbridge 24.

With the halftime whistle approaching Cowbridge scored their fifth and best try of the half. R.Williams made another great run down the blind side, handing off four Gwernyfed defenders.

By the time R.Williams had been brought down nearly half of the Gwernyfed defenders had been taken out of the game. With some simple passing along the backs Iwan Price-Thomas, the Cowbridge full back entered the line to score his second try of the game. The halftime score was Gwernyfed 0, Cowbridge 29.

The second half started as the first had finished with Cowbridge attacking deep inside the Gwernyfed 22. Gwernyfed were defending hard at a ruck five metres out from their line, when the ball squirted out and Evan Thomas was the first to react.

Thomas fly hacked the ball over the try line and Iestyn Fenn pounced on the ball to score the first try of the second half. Cowbridge made a number of substitutions, one of which was a welcome return for Harry Ridge.

Playing full back Ridge gathered a clearing kick and ran hard into the Gwernyfed defence. As the Gwernyfed defence gathered around Ridge he managed to get a pass away to Dixon, who scampered over for his second try of the game; E.Thomas converted.

With the game entering the final stages, Harry Bluck the powerful Cowbridge prop, went on a barnstorming individual run. With virtually the whole of the Gwernyfed pack on his back, Bluc continued to pump his legs and was brought down within inches of the line.

From the resulting quick ball, Barny Langdon-Cryer went over for his first try of the game. To be fair to Gwernyfed they did not let their heads drop at any stage and secured themselves a consolation try.

From a scrum deep inside their own 22, Gwernyfed bravely ran the ball. The Gwernyfed inside centre took advantage of a huge gap in the Cowbridge midfield and showed great pace to score a length of the field try.

The game's final try came following another run by R.Williams, taking four Gwernyfed defenders to bring him down. I.Williams made a blind side run and put in a great scoring pass to Dan Roberts, the substitute left winger, to make the final score Gwernyfed 7, Cowbridge 53.

Well done boys on a great performance and your progression to the second round of the Blues Cup where the team will play away at Cymry Caerdydd RFC.

GJ

VALE'S COACHES OF THE FUTURE CHOSEN

ABOVE: Coun Gwyn John pictured with Ieuan, Tom and Liam, and the Vale Council's 'Coaches of the Future'.

FIFTEEN sixth form pupils across the Vale have recently been selected to be part of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's 'Coaches of the Future' scheme.

The initiative was launched at the Civic Offices in Barry with a special reception that included a visit from two British swimmers, Ieuan Lloyd and Tom Haffield, who spoke to the group about the positive impact that their swimming coaches have made so far in their careers.

Ieuan and Tom were also joined at the launch by Liam Tanner, a sixth form pupil from Barry Comprehensive School who is one of the Vale of Glamorgan's four Gold Sports Ambassadors.

Vale of Glamorgan Council's cabinet member for leisure, Coun Gwyn John, said: "This is an extremely exciting initiative which will provide an invaluable insight into sports coaching. Ieuan, Tom and Liam are three excellent examples of young people who inspire people through sport and it was fascinating to hear from Ieuan and Tom about how various coaches have helped them in different ways due to their differing styles and attributes."

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VALE MAYOR HOLDS RECEPTION FOR LOCAL REFEREES' SOCIETY

DURING the term of his office, the Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan, is patron to the Vale of Glamorgan Referees' Society.

Coun Howard Hamilton hosted a reception for members of the society and was entertained with their stories on the life of a referee.

He said: "It was an interesting evening and I enjoyed hearing about the decisions the referees have to make and situations they have to manage.

"I was impressed with their professionalism and their commitment to encourage younger members of their society."

The Vale of Glamorgan Referees' Society, which is sponsored by RIM Motors, meets on the second Monday of each month between August and May at Cadoxton Conservative Club, Barry.

For further information, contact the secretary Terry Allday on: vogrs@hotmail.co.uk.

Iwan grapples with success!

RHOOSE resident Iwan Baker was rewarded for switching to the lower 69kg class at the recent Apsull International Wrestling Open with a silver medal.

Arriving at the weigh-in at 69.65kg half an hour of jogging and skipping was required before he tipped the scales at the exact weight.

Iwan, a 16 year old pupil at Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg, took the scalp of the British junior bronze medallist on the way to the final with the highlight of his day being a first round throw and pin combination.

Competing in the under-18 category final against a vastly more experienced opponent proved a step too far but silver in this international competition is a fine achievement and Iwan will go into his next competition in Malta as part of the Welsh team with great confidence.

RB

Llansannor Primary school pupils win Cardiff pool gala

THREE hundred young swimmers from seven primary schools in south Wales took part in a special gala hosted by Cardiff International Pool.

Split into 25 teams, the year-5 and 6 pupils from the Vale and Cardiff enjoyed a series of fun relays ranging from front crawl and backstroke to woggle and body board races.

"The day was a huge success. The children had a lot of fun and we hope it's encouraged them to continue to swim and develop their ability," said Darren Phillips, centre manager of Cardiff International Pool, which is operated by Parkwood Leisure on behalf of Cardiff City Council.

Every participant went home with a swim goody bag while the winning team, Llansannor Primary School, won a trophy and free return trip to the leisure pool for the whole school.

Support for the event was provided by Cardiff City Council, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Swim Wales, and construction company Kier.

Ladies are up for the Cup!

DINAS ladies entertained Goytre from Port Talbot at Bryn Y Don on Sunday in an enthralling cup match.

The home side started brightly with the ladies getting the ball down and playing their passing game. Goytre were a threat early on with their pacey wide players but the villagers were very alert to the dangers.

The home side opened the scoring when Laura Lewis finished off a great move; Rachel Harold the Dinas keeper rolled the ball out to Emma Thompson who carried the ball 30 yards to release wing back Brooke Howells, who put Lewis clear. Dinas then moved up the gears and moments later Leanne Pattemore stroked the ball home from 15 yards.

The home side looked worthy of their lead as they moved the ball around the pitch and showed the importance of training.

As halftime approached Dinas were guilty of over playing the ball in dangerous areas and the Goytre midfielder pulled a goal back with a piledriver, giving Harold little chance.

The instructions at the break were very simple - keep playing the right way, get on the ball, use minimal touches and earn the right to play.

The second half saw the villagers blow the visitors away in the opening 15 minutes as two well worked goals from Emily Gillard and Lewis put the game to bed.

The defence of Thompson, Ellison, and Beddoe had a solid match and always looked to start attacks off time and time again. Gillard seems to have found her position, allowing Saunders and Pattemore a platform to play off.

The midfield three looked very composed on the ball, keeping possession very well for long periods and all looking to get on the scoresheet.

Pushing Tracey White further up the pitch was vital as her strength and presence was a major part in getting the ball to stick through the attacks.

The lively Lewis was a pain for the visiting defenders, while Swedish signing Ellen Samelius had a very impressive debut at left wing back as her and right wing back Brooke Howells destroyed the opposition full backs.

Substitutes Jodi Bowles, Rhianne Booth and Danielle Speight were introduced in the second half and all continued the team's fine football.

Well done ladies and a big thank to Radisson Blu for sponsoring the ladies; final score 4-1 to Dinas Powys.

LS

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62 FORD Fiesta 1.2 Zetec 3-Dr In silver, 9,000 miles, a/c alloys **£8,495**

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10 FIAT 500 1.4 Lounge In red, 40,000 miles, 1 owner, very stylish **£6,495**

59 FORD Focus 1.6 Zetec 5-Dr In silver, 36,000 miles **£6,495**

61 VAUXHALL Corsa 1.2 SXi 3-Dr In black, 35,000 miles, alloys etc **£5,995**

10 SEAT Ibiza 1.4 TDi Diesel 'S'. In red, 64,000 miles, £30 road tax **£5,995**

10 PEUGEOT 308 'S' 1.6 Auto 5-Dr In silver 31,000, miles, a/c, c/d etc **£5,995**

59 SKODA Octavia 1.9 Diesel SE Estate. In silver, 75,000 miles, nice example **£5,995**

09 MAZDA 2 Sport 1.5 3-Dr. In black, 46,000 miles, c/d, a/c, alloys, 1 owner **£5,995**

58 CITROEN C5 2.0 VTR+ Auto. In met blue, 39,000 miles, fantastic value at **£5,995**

57 MERCEDES C180K Coupe 'Sport Edition' Auto In blue-black metallic, 80,000 miles **£5,995**

10 RENAULT Megane 1.6 Dynamique. In electric blue, 49,000 mile family hatch **£5,695**

59 RENAULT Clio 1.2 Extreme 3-Dr In black, 36,000 miles, low insurance **£5,695**

09 RENAULT Clio 1.5 Diesel Dynamique 'S'. In red, 32,000 miles, £30 road tax **£5,495**

58 FORD Fiesta 1.2 Zetec 3-Dr. In black, 64,000 miles with parking sensor **£5,495**

08 NISSAN Note 1.4 Acenta. In electric blue, 39,000 miles, alloys, a/c, c/d **£5,495**

08 SKODA FAbia 3 TDi 1.9 Estate. In met grey, 71,000 miles **£5,495**

08 VAUXHALL Zafira 1.9 Diesel Automatic Exclusive. In met blue, 61,000 mile 7 seater **£5,495**

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12 FIAT Panda 1.2 Active 5-Dr. In white, 26,000 miles, 1 owner, £30 road tax **£4,995**

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10 SMART Fortwo Pulse MHD 1.0 Convertible In black, 31,000 miles, £20 road tax **£4,995**

09 FORD Focus 1.6 Zetec 5-Dr In met blue, 75,000 miles, ideal family hatch **£4,995**

09 SUZUKI Splash 1.2 GLS+ 5-Dr. In met blue, 55,000 miles, low insurance **£4,995**

58 RENAULT Clio Dynamique 1.2 Estate In silver, 60,000 miles with a/c, alloys **£4,995**

58 RENAULT Clio 1.5 Diesel Dynamique 5-Dr In black, 71,000 miles, 1 owner, £30 road tax **£4,995**

08 RENAULT Clio 1.2 Dynamique 5-Dr (100) In black, 50,000 miles, 2 owners **£4,995**

08 KIA Ceed 1.6 LS 5-Dr In met blue, 47,000 miles, alloys, a/c etc **£4,995**

57 SEAT Altea 1.9 Diesel Reference In met ruby red, 72,000 miles, 2 owners **£4,995**

60 HUYUNDAI i10 Classic 5-Dr. In silver, only 11,000 miles and £30 road tax **£4,995**

60 SUZUKI Swift 1.3 SZ3 3-Dr In red, 59,000 miles, 1 owner **£4,995**

10 VAUXHALL Corsa 1.2 SXi 3-Dr In white 71,000 miles with privacy glass, alloys, cd **£4,995**

10 TOYOTA Aygo "Blue" 1.0 VVTi 5-Dr In electric blue, 42,000 miles, £20 road tax **£4,995**

09 PEUGEOT 207 1.4 Diesel 'S' 5-Dr In silver, 63,000 miles, low road tax **£4,995**

09 SEAT Ibiza 1.4 SE 3-Dr In met-lime, 52,000 miles **£4,995**

08 FORD Focus 1.6 Zetec 5-Dr In met-blue, 61,000 miles with a/c etc **£4,995**

57 HYUNDAI i130 Style 2.0 Diesel 5-Dr In silver, 72,000 miles, nice example **£4,995**

55 MINI Cooper In black (chilli pack), 17" alloys, host of extras **£4,995**

03 BMW 330 Diesel Sport Touring Auto In silver with grey leather, nice example at **£4,995**

55 MINI One 'Seven Edition'. In met-red, 73,000 miles, alloys, a/c etc. **£4,795**

58 PEUGEOT 207 1.4 Diesel 'S' 5-Dr In met turquoise, 55,000 miles **£4,695**

08 MAZDA 2 1.4 TS2 3-Dr. In black, 59,000 miles, alloys, a/c etc **£4,695**

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53 MERCEDES SLK 200 6-Speed In silver, 89,000 mile convertable at **£4,695**

07 FORD Focus 1.8 Zetec 5-Dr. In ice blue, 47,000 miles with a/c **£4,395**

57 TOYOTA Yaris 1.3 TR 5-Dr In black, 64,000 miles, a/c alloys **£4,295**

54 MINI Cooper. In electric blue/black roof, nice specification, good looking mini at **£4,295**

08 CITROEN C3 Rhythm 1.4. In ice blue, 49,000 miles, a/c, c/d **£3,995**

58 VAUXHALL Corsa 1.0 Life 3-Dr In silver, 27,000 miles, low insurance **£3,995**

57 SEAT Ibiza 1.2 Reference 5-Dr In met grey 53,000 miles **£3,995**

07 SEAT Ibiza 1.4 Diesel Reference Sport 3-Dr In red, 79,000 miles **£3,995**

56 FORD Focus 1.6 Diesel LX 5-Dr Automatic In silver, 49,000 miles **£3,995**

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08 VAUXHALL Corsa 1.3 Diesel Life 5-Dr In white with a/c, £30 road tax **£3,795**

08 PEUGEOT 107 Urban 5-Dr In silver, 37,000 miles with c/l, e/w, £20 road tax, low insurance **£3,695**

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04 VAUXHALL Meriva 1.6 Design In met blue, 64,000 miles **£2,495**

02 JAGUAR X-Type 2.1 V6 SE In met blue with cream leather, 75,000 miles **£2,495**

06 PEUGEOT 407 2.0 SE. In silver, 90,000 miles, family hatch at **£1,995**

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10 SMART Fortwo Pulse MHD Convertible
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Club celebrates president Tom's 90th birthday!

IT was a momentous evening at Cowbridge RFC last Friday as the great, the good and many others, gathered to celebrate president Tom Mainwaring's forthcoming 90th birthday.

The club was packed with players and members past and present, indicating Tom's popularity and influence over the years.

Once all had been called to order, club stalwart Richard Killick gave a extremely well researched resume of Tom's past. Born in Taibach, Tom had an illustrious rugby career playing for Maesteg including a Welsh trial playing with the Probables in 1947, Aberavon, London Welsh and three games for Cowbridge.

Moving to London in 1950, Tom returned to south Wales in 1960 and moved to Cowbridge in 1964, starting a long association with the club that continues to this day. Over the years he has been coach, committee member, long- serving treasurer, and, to this day, president.

Tom will also famously be remembered by many as one of the founders of the mini-rugby section, all the while supported by his wonderful wife Nora.

Once Richard had finished Tom took to the floor with some great reminiscences that entertained everyone. Chairman John Griffiths thanked Tom and invited all to join in the buffet.

A great night was had and it was a pleasure for all to be able to be with Tom on his special occasion. Thanks to everyone who contributed to making this a special night.

A special mention should go to Richard Killick who, along with Brian Owen, spent hours with Tom putting together the presentation of Tom's life - well done all.

There are no games for the club this weekend as the autumn internationals continue with the All Blacks this Saturday; those not able to go to the game are welcome to watch the spectacle at the club.

RV/RK

SISTERS ON THE RUN!

LLANTWIT MAJOR Comprehensive Sisters Erin (year 13) and Alisha (year 9) Hayes have both been selected to run for south Wales in the Welsh Regional cross country championships to be held in Builth Wells on Saturday, December 14; both girls run locally for Bridgend AC.

CH

The Cowbridge darts round-up

ON Tuesday November 11, a full round of league matches were played.

The Llanharry Workings Men Club strengthened their lead at the top of the table with a 7-2 win at the Farmers Arms. The race for second spot is now very close with the Edmondes B closing the gap to the Highwayman Inn by defeating the Old Post ladies 8-1 while the Highwayman Inn only won 6-3 against the Edmondes C.

The other match, played at the Hare and Hounds, was very close, going down to the very last throw, with an out by Trevor Morgan sealing the victory for the Edmondes A by a score of 5-4. It was night of excellent darts with Rhys Jurys finishing a leg in 11 darts and Sally McCaver recording a 92 three-dart average.

Present league standings after seven matches, are: Llanharry (50 points), Highwayman Inn and Edmondes B (37), Edmondes A (34), Hare and Hounds (30), Edmondes C (25), Farmer's Arms (22) and Old Post Ladies (15).

Next week, Tuesday, November 25, the Hare and Hounds will host the semi-finals and the final of the Mixed Doubles.

The semi-final line-up is Trevor Morgan and Sue Morgan (Edmondes A) versus Mark Dowling and Daisey Repke (Edmondes C) and Pam Adams and Tony Fox (Farmers Arms) versus Steve Simmonite and Ann Daily (Edmondes A). Matches start at 8.15pm and spectators are welcome.

Note all teams can register new players until the New Year so if you wish to play darts this season get in touch.

For further information e-mail Paul at cowbridgedarts@gmail.com, up-to-date information can be found on the website: www.darts.apsn.co.uk.

PJT

Llantwit Major under-10s pushed

LAST Sunday Llantwit under-10s welcomed Porthcawl to play. The match was one of the toughest, most nail-biting matches Llantwit have been involved in so far this season!

Porthcawl were strong and fast. They were on the ball quickly from the start, making Llantwit's defence really wake up. It took some hard work from all the team to open up the field enough for Corey to break through to score his first try of the match. Porthcawl were quick to respond with some great tackles and ran over to score their first try.

The play was scrappy, with Porthcawl winning most of the ball at the breakdown, but it was only through the sheer determination of Llantwit's defence that Porthcawl didn't cross the try line a few more times.

After a nailbiting few minutes of play, the ball was passed out to Sam A who ran in a fantastic try, followed by a quick turn over ball and Sam A's second try of the match.

Porthcawl were chasing everything, and up on play quickly, and through their great passing they pushed over the line to score again.

At the restart, Sam A took a quick pass out, and with another trademark run down the outside, he scored his third try. Porthcawl were attacking hard and it took some fantastic tackles from Corey, Josh and Sam H to stop them.

Llantwit were starting to get their game together, opening up the field enough for Corey to dive over the line to score two hard earned tries.

The last 10 minutes of play were nerve wracking to say the least! Porthcawl were hitting hard, and with some great team play they pushed over the line twice.

Llantwit responded by getting the ball out to Sam A on the wing again and he was able to run in another fantastic try. This was followed by a fantastic effort from Josh to get over the line.

It was Porthcawl who had the last say of the match with two well-worked tries, bringing the final score to 8-6 to Llantwit. Thanks to Porthcawl for the best match we've had so far!

Try scorers: Corey (3) Sam A (4) and Josh (1). Man of the match: Corey - for an awesome effort, and scoring three fantastic tries.

Squad: Corey Lougher, Iwan Thomas, Aneurin Price, Cristian Parry, Tom Roberts, Sam Alexander, Logan Pike, Dylan Wright, Jamie Jenkins, Rhys Davies, Olly Williams, Sam Harry, Josh Wakeham, Robert Jones, Jack Evans, Gabriel Lilford and Noah Ridgeway.

SR

Llantwit under-7s beaten by Porthcawl

LLANTWIT Major RFC under-7s welcomed Porthcawl on Sunday in the unfamiliar surroundings of the Comprehensive School.

With both teams having great numbers it was decided to play two games at once to ensure they all had maximum game time.

Both teams started exceptionally well, running in the tries and holding Porthcawl out with great tagging. The first games ended with a 6-4 win and a 8-11 loss. With their confidence up the teams entered the second games hoping to rack up the tries.

In another closely contested game on the top pitch the team narrowly lost 6-7 at the final whistle. The team on the bottom pitch didn't fare so well with quite a few missed tags allowing Porthcawl to run in tries at will, ending 5-10. Overall, Llantwit lost 25-32.

Top try scorer on the day was Thomas Collins with an outstanding six tries! Other scores came from Oliver Ingram (1), Bleddyn Mitchem (1), Jos Bourner (3), Tomos Davies (3), Aaron Moce (1), Dylan Godsell (3), Joel Harris (2), Kyle Pagano (3) and Bleddyn Daw (2).

The Llantwit coaches awarded the player of the match certificates to the two captains on the day, Evan Boult and Maverick Jennings. Neither managed to get on the score sheet but led by example both with ball in hand and their defensive tagging - well done!

This week the team make the short journey to local rivals Barry.

Team: Aaron Moce, Dylan Godsell, Joel Harris, Kyle Pagano, Bleddyn Daw, Ifan Lovejoy, Lloyd Morgan, Evan Boult, Oliver Ingram, Bleddyn Mitchem, Thomas Collins, Jos Bourner, Tomos Davies, Norah Griffiths, Maverick Jennings and Theo Elsenburg.

IG

Petanque competition

FOLLOWING the success of the charity petanque competition in September when £150 was raised to be divided between College Fields Nursing Home and Marie Curie, it has been decided to hold another event on Sunday, November 23, with registration at 1.30pm for a 2pm start.

Play will take place until late afternoon at the Llancarfan piste (near the foot of school hill) until light curtails proceedings! Vehicle parking is available to the rear of The Fox and Hounds P.H. with a footway skirting the village church to meet up with the road near the foot of school hill.

A draw of players will be made into teams of three - no-one turned away! Four teams competing at the same time may be accommodated.

The format will depend on the number of players that emerge as well as weather considerations. Entry fee will £2 per player (includes a raffle strip). The raffle money will go towards Llancarfan Society funds with the remaining proceeds towards petanque prizes.

Drinks will be available by donation or attendees are welcome to bring their own food and/or drink.

If you haven't played before and are interested in discovering the world of petanque, we will give a run-down of the basic rules plus some tips on how to play the game. The handful of regulars are still at the beginner to minimal experience level and welcome newcomers to join in the fun.

If you are interested please contact Phil Watts (01446 411249) or Russ Watts (07779 157407 or russ.watts@btopenworld.com) for further information or to register in advance.

RW

Bridge results

RESULTS for the Vale of Glamorgan bridge club for the last two weeks:

November 10 (Children in Need Sims) - 1st Tony Howarth & Kevin Maddox 70.63%, 2nd Marjorie Morris & Linda Pinnock 62.92%, 3rd Tony Ratcliff & Trish Tracy 62.29%.

November 17 - 1st Julia Evans & Graham Norris 64.88%, 2nd Vida Halford & Glyn Williams 62.20%, 3rd John Henson & Geoff Tinkler 58.93%.

LE

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Impressive draw in Belgium may be the catalyst for Euro qualification

WHEN an under-strength Wales side picked up a point in the final game of the 2014 World Cup qualifiers in October last year, against a Belgium side already heading for Brazil, it was an impressive result, albeit in a game that was a dead rubber, with the Belgians on their way to the World Cup and Wales heading for the ignominy of finishing second from bottom in the group.

Fast forward 13 months, and the two teams met again - but this time in vastly different circumstances. The Belgians, having taken four points from their opening two games, were looking for a victory that would push them further up Group B in the battle to qualify for Euro 2016, while Wales were looking to consolidate, two wins and a draw from their opening three games seeing them top the pile.

Over the ensuing 90 minutes, Wales battled hard, the first half dominance of the Belgians giving way to a slightly more even second half with Belgium having more control of the game.

When the final whistle went, the scoreline was different from last time, 0–0 rather than 1–1, but the result the same, a draw that, at least for a few hours, kept the Welsh top of Group B before Israel's 3-0 win over Bosnia-Herzegovina.

So what to read into this result for a Welsh team, dare I say it, starting to live up to their potential? Well it was their most impressive performance yet in the group, one that showed that they could contain a Belgium side ranked fourth in the world while looking capable of grabbing something on the break, the pace of Gareth Bale always a threat against a defence that, *sans* Vincent Kompany, didn't look the most secure.

It was also another vindication of Chris Coleman who, having taken his time to win over hearts and minds, has started to show some tactical nous and belief in his squad to get results.

The key to any qualification dream is to win your home games, and having dropped two points against the aforementioned Bosnians (a result looking more and more like a missed opportunity), you feel Wales can't afford any more slip-ups at home, while avoiding defeat on their travels.

Do that and there is every chance that Wales will break their major tournament hoodoo – then we can maybe start dreaming of the holy grail that is the World Cup in Russia 2018...

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After the poor showing against Fiji, it's back to the tried and trusted...

'All Blacks come fully loaded' Gatland warns his Welsh troops

BACK PAGE COMMENT by Don John

ONCE UPON A TIME, Fijians were rather patronisingly applauded by rugby's global elite for a care-free, uninhibited approach that made the Islanders formidable Sevens exponents, but which, it was said, could never transfer to the more serious demands of the 15-man game.

Now all that is slowly changing in a professional era that sees more and more South Sea Islanders join the ranks of top class clubs around the world -– as was shown in the Fijian line-up against Wales at the Millennium Stadium on Saturday – with illustrious names like Stade Francais, Wellington, Crusaders, Leicester Tigers and Ospreys, liberally scattered through the squad listed in the match day programme.

That fact alone should have been warning enough to the Welsh squad that they were not to be taken lightly.

Even so, despite sweeping changes to the team that narrowly lost (28-33) to Australia the week before, a decisive home result was to be expected in a must-win game against next year's Rugby World Cup opponents, in order to maintain vital momentum for the two much bigger autumn tests to follow.

Yes, there had been some close outcomes in the previous nine clashes (seven of which Wales had won) and no-one will ever forget that Fiji had defeated Wales 38-34 in the 2007 World Cup – but the Welsh camp expected to comfortably see off the hastily-assembled Islanders' spirited but limited challenge, and clear the decks for the real action against world champions New Zealand.

Instead, the script went badly wrong, derailing the impetus gained from the previous week's combative performance against the Wallabies and setting off alarm bells – as an inept display against a team reduced to 14 men saw Wales counting themselves extremely lucky to squeak home by a four-point margin (17-13) at the end.

It began with a Welsh fumble from the kick-off, which was fortunately rescued and then George North raised the hopes of 61,000-plus supporters by opening the scoring with a very well-executed try, which recalled outside half Rhys Priestland was unable to convert.

Fellow wing Alex Cuthbert followed suit with a second unconverted try in the corner, but Fiji's giant centre Nemani Nadolo (who was to accumulate all of his side's points), reduced the deficit to four with two penalties in quick succession, and failed with a third attempt, as all too familiar basic Welsh errors mounted, bringing groans around the ground.

Then, with half time approaching, the Welsh eight redoubled their efforts and were rewarded with a penalty try. Priestland slotted over the simple conversion, to make the score 17-6 at the interval, after battling Fiji were awarded yet another penalty, which fortunately for Wales, was unsuccessful.

If the drab first half spectacle was disappointing, the second half reached an even lower ebb, so much so that many among the massed ranks of spectators lost interest and decided to entertain themselves, with a series of Mexican waves cascading around the stadium.

Meanwhile, Welsh frustration with Fijian spoiling tactics was mollified when a second yellow card reduced the visitors to 14 men for the remaining half hour.

However, this did little to improve Welsh fortunes, not helped by some bizarre decisions by the match officials, when Wales had two seemingly legitimate tries disallowed – one set up by the deserved man-of-the-match, Liam Williams.

Welsh woes were worsened when once again, just as in the match against Australia, and with just minutes left on the clock, a carelessly misjudged pass in attack was intercepted. This time, it was the bulky Nemani Nadolo who was gifted an unchallenged opportunity to race almost the length of the field for a try which he converted himself, to make it 17-13.

Fiji were still threatening as the final whistle sounded and Priestland thankfully brought what had become a sorry saga to an end by kicking the ball out of play.

The grim expressions on the faces of the Welsh coaches at the post-match press conference told it all, with head coach Warren Gatland saying tersely: "*I am embarrassed by the display. We let the supporters down. It was a game we should have won…The strongest teams put these sides away…*"

He pointed to the high number of turnovers conceded and admitted to being "*frustrated*" by some of the officials' decisions which didn't help the flow of a game that had turned into a "*dogfight*".

There is no doubt that Wales will need to step up more than a couple of gears if they are to have any hope at all of matching, let alone defeating, the all-conquering All Blacks – who rested most of their first choice players in the 24-16 win over Scotland at Edinburgh, in readiness for Cardiff.

As Gatland warned: "*They will be "coming to the Millennium Stadium fully loaded on Saturday.*"

Not surprising then, after last week's dire display, that he has largely reverted to a tried and trusted line-up for this ultimate autumn challenge – even risking newly-recovered centre Jonathan Davies and Leigh Halfpenny (who replaces the unlucky Liam Williams at full back).

It's good to see the hugely-gifted, but sadly under-used James Hook, back on the replacements bench and this time he will be hoping he actually gets a proper chance to play!

WALES TEAM v NEW ZEALAND

Leigh Halfpenny (Toulon), Alex Cuthbert (Blues), Jonathan Davies (Clermont Auvergne), Jamie Roberts (Racing Metro), George North (Northampton Saints), Dan Biggar (Ospreys), Rhys Webb (Ospreys); Paul James (Bath), Richard Hibbard (Gloucester), Samson Lee (Scarlets), Jake Ball (Scarlets), Alun Wyn Jones (Ospreys), Dan Lydiate (unattached), Sam Warburton (Blues, capt), Taulupe Faletau (Dragons).

Replacements:
Scott Baldwin (Ospreys), Nicky Smith (Ospreys), Rhodri Jones (Scarlets), Luke Charteris (Racing Metro), Justin Tipuric (Ospreys), Mike Phillips (Racing Metro), James Hook (Gloucester), Liam Williams (Scarlets).